



Factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards remarketing, retargeting and online purchase intentions

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DECLARATION

I, Joseline Nadia Ndeudjeu, declare that:

“Factors influencing consumers’ attitudes towards remarketing, retargeting and online purchase intentions”

is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this thesis has not previously been submitted by me at any other university.

Joseline Nadia Ndeudjeu

November 2024

Vanderbijlpark

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ABSTRACT

Key terms: Remarketing, Retargeting, Digital marketing, Website design, Purchasing intention, Online shopping, Consumer behaviour, Attitudes towards advertisements, South Africa.

The growth of digital marketing has significantly altered how consumers interact with brands online, with remarketing and retargeting emerging as critical strategies for engaging consumers. These marketing techniques leverage consumer data to display personalised advertisements, designed to influence purchase decisions. While remarketing and retargeting have gained prominence internationally, their impact within the South African market remains less explored. This study aimed to fill this gap by proposing and empirically testing a framework that examines the factors that influence South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their subsequent online purchase intentions.

The main objective of this study was to assess the influence of various factors, such as consumer awareness, conversion conditions, privacy concerns, informativeness, intrusiveness and e-commerce business elements (e.g., web design, online reviews, e-trust and e-reputation) on South African consumers' attitudes and online purchase behaviours. Data for this study were collected from a non-probability purposive sample of 450 South African consumers aged 19 to 58, who had prior online shopping experience and were active on social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp and LinkedIn. The data were collected using a structured online questionnaire and analysed through various statistical techniques, including structural equation modelling (SEM), to validate the hypothesised relationships. The study's conceptual model showed that several factors had significant positive effects on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Specifically, it was found that the informativeness of remarketing and retargeting strategies positively influenced consumer attitudes, while perceived risks such as privacy concerns and intrusiveness negatively affected these attitudes. Additionally, conversion conditions and e-commerce business factors like web design and online reviews played an important role in shaping consumer attitudes and online purchase behaviours.

Further analysis revealed that South African consumers who perceived remarketing and retargeting advertisements as informative were more likely to develop positive attitudes towards these strategies and ultimately be influenced to make online purchases. However, privacy concerns and the frequency of advertisements created barriers, reducing the effectiveness of remarketing efforts. The study also demonstrated the importance of trust and the user experience in the online shopping environment. Consumers were more likely to respond favourably to brands that maintained transparent data practices and user-friendly websites.

This study makes several important contributions to the understanding of digital marketing in South Africa. It provides new insights into how South African consumers perceive remarketing and retargeting strategies, highlighting key factors that influence their attitudes and purchase intentions. The study's findings suggest that businesses can improve consumer engagement by focusing on delivering informative, personalised advertisements while minimising privacy concerns and enhancing website design. From a theoretical perspective, this study expands the literature on remarketing and retargeting in emerging markets by developing and empirically testing a comprehensive framework. This model serves as a useful tool for online businesses seeking to understand how different factors, such as consumer awareness and perceived risks, impact online purchase intentions. The results also highlight the importance of building trust and improving user experience, both of which are critical for influencing consumers' attitudes and driving online sales.

Future research should address sample diversity limitations, investigate the disconnect between awareness and purchase intentions, explore privacy concerns in greater detail and further examine the roles of informativeness and website design in shaping long-term consumer behaviour. These efforts can deepen our understanding of effective remarketing and retargeting strategies and inform data-driven approaches for improving consumer engagement in the evolving digital landscape.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NWU	North-West University
TAM	Technology acceptance model
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
TPB	Theory of planned behaviour
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
SEM	Structural equation modelling
CRM	Consumer relationship management
CTAs	Calls-to-action

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CHAPTER 1 STUDY BLUEPRINT

1.1 Introduction

Online shopping, also referred to as e-commerce or e-tail (Moagar-Poladian *et al.*, 2017:167), is becoming an increasingly popular method of shopping for a variety of products for various reasons, namely convenience, competitive prices, personalisation, easy and abundant access to information and concerns about privacy (Al-Hujran *et al.*, 2018:80). To date the benefits associated with online shopping have primarily favoured certain groups of individuals, such as the youth, the more affluent and educated as well as technologically competent individuals, all of whom had frequent access to the Internet and found this avenue of purchasing appealing and convenient (Chouk & Mani, 2019:452). Consequently, consumers outside these groups mentioned above are still reluctant to use online shopping due to several factors as mentioned by Phyp (2019:6), which include the perceived lack of maintaining their privacy, financial security concerns, absence of human interaction, failure of technology and a general familiarity with the online service encounter.

The global e-commerce market is expected to be worth more than 8.1 trillion US dollars by 2026, with 91 percent of consumers making online purchases using a smartphone (Chawla & Kumar, 2022:589). The e-commerce market in South Africa, being the 42nd largest in the world (Nimo, 2022; Prasad, 2023:174), will reach more than R400 billion by 2025, with an expected 1 billion annual transactions (Prasad, 2023:174). Despite the evident growth of the e-commerce market, be it arguably because of the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses joining the online market have significant challenges to overcome. One of these challenges is the high bounce rate on e-commerce websites. For instance, in early 2022, the average bounce rate was 43 percent (Mohsin, 2022). That is, if the e-commerce business has 100 site visitors, 43 would leave almost immediately, without visiting the remainder of the website. Furthermore, the current e-commerce benchmarks for “add-to-cart sessions” and sessions resulting in a transaction are 14.5 and 3.3 percent respectively (Chaffey, 2023).

These suboptimal statistics necessitate e-commerce businesses to have strategies in place to entice visitors back to their websites and entice them to make a purchase. Every consumer moves through the conversion funnel of a business differently; therefore, it is up to marketers to grab their interest, earn their trust and persuade them to proceed (Park, 2023). This would enable marketers to follow consumers' journeys from early interest to ultimate purchase via conversion funnels. This typically occurs by reminding consumers of their searched-for or chosen products, to improve their conversion or sales rates. The first product was sold online in 1994 (Hesterberg, 2021). In the same year, 44 percent of Internet users who saw the first launched banner

advertisement clicked on it, consequently generating a successful chain reaction (LaFrance, 2017). Since then, there has been a significant increase in the growth of online advertising (Shand, 2020). Despite people's tendency to avoid advertising, retargeting effectively brings back consumers and supports them in finalising their purchase decisions (Rodrigues *et al.*, 2019:896). Retargeting and remarketing, two distinct strategies, consist of advertising directly to consumers who have already visited a brand's website or e-store (Hecht, 2021). Remarketing refers to the tactic of sending email and SMS campaigns to visitors who have browsed a specific website and abandoned their cart. A prerequisite for this strategy is that consumers had to have volunteered their email address and mobile number, or both, either by creating an account or signing up for newsletters to the specific site or affiliate sites (Cuofano, 2024; Russell, 2022; Ho, 2023; Shopify, 2023). Retargeting, on the other hand, refers to online advertisement placement or display advertisements targeting users who have interacted with a particular website in specific ways without purchasing (Uttley, 2021). Once a visitor enters a website, clicks on a product or takes a certain preferred action, a cookie is set in their browser. These strategies are expected to dominate the future of online advertising due to its growing popularity among professionals (Fourberg *et al.*, 2021:21). However, increasing evidence shows that consumers often feel uneasy when targeted advertisements align with their true preferences too closely (Zhu & Kanjanamekanant, 2021:35).

As such, this study aims to fill the gap in the literature concerning consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies and their influence on consumers' purchase intentions. The findings of this study will empower e-commerce businesses by providing a deeper understanding of consumers making use of e-commerce and their associated preferences and perceptions. The findings will also give e-businesses guidelines as to how they could transform their remarketing and retargeting strategies to increase their conversion rates and ultimate success.

1.2 Background and research problem

Digital advertising has transformed the way business is conducted in the 21st century. In an ever-changing marketing environment, one of the most important strategies retailers use to remain competitive is the ability to exploit or at least adapt to change (McKinsey & Company, 2020). This has enabled businesses to adapt to the changing preferences of consumers to meet their potential needs and expectations (Kapur, 2020:60). Individuals today are more dependent on the Internet than ever before, as they find it challenging to work without Internet access (Statista, 2021). This reliance has opened new doors for both businesses and consumers, making e-commerce one of

the most favoured online activities globally, with worldwide e-retail sales hitting 4.2 trillion US dollars in 2020 (Coppola, 2022).

The South African retail sector holds the title of the largest in sub-Saharan Africa and ranks as the 20th largest retail market globally (Mwamba & Qutieshat, 2021:1564). Of the 2 082 shopping centres across Africa, 1 950 are located in South Africa. This positions South Africa as the sixth highest globally in the number of shopping malls, as reported by the South African Council of Shopping Centres (Nandonde & Stanton, 2022:189). Online platforms and e-commerce have transformed the retail landscape, extending the scope for businesses to connect with a wider array of consumers. For reference, in 2018, South Africa's online retail market was estimated at 1.4 percent of the total retail market, whereas in 2020, the market share of the online retail market grew to 2.8 percent (Dovetail, 2021; Kibuacha, 2021), meaning the online retail market doubled in three years. This growth rate was higher than the two percent increase predicted for online shopping engagement in South Africa for 2022 (Stewart, 2019).

South African e-commerce has been active for over two decades, starting with Kalahari.com, which launched in 1998. This was followed by Takealot.com, owned by the Naspers Group, which also owns brands like Superbalist and Spree. Together, Takealot and Naspers Group are major players in the online market. There are profiles of 41 businesses, including global players such as Amazon and Alibaba, the major local businesses including Takealot and Massmart and retailers such as Shoprite, Pick 'n Pay and Woolworths, which have significantly increased their online sales (Dos Santos, 2020:28). The proportion of sales made by international retail operations is generally highest in non-food sectors compared to local retail businesses (Deloitte, 2021:11). According to Mitra (2021:21), e-commerce is susceptible to competition as consumers can search for a product or service from anywhere in the world. Consequently, international online stores have the opportunity to tap into world markets, including the South African market, which means that they are in direct competition with online stores in South Africa.

E-commerce in South Africa has been growing in scope and the coronavirus outbreak has driven an unprecedented boom in online spending and adoption (Schaefer & Bulbulia, 2021). As South Africans avoided shopping malls and stores, online sales topped 50 percent higher than the total forecast according to a study by World-Wide Worx in 2020, which accounted for 1.4 percent of all retail in South Africa in 2018 (World Wide Worx, 2021). This growth was predicted by MasterCard (2020), which found that 68 percent of South Africans were spending more time shopping online than prior to the pandemic. Conversion funnels are crucial for e-commerce enterprises. While marketers often gauge content performance by website traffic, a more effective metric is conversion funnels (Park, 2023). To achieve this, content should support conversion throughout the buyers' journey (Bailyn, 2021). Businesses should use marketing funnels to lead consumers

through each stage of the buying process while understanding that consumers are the key to an efficient funnel.

In addition to being persuasive and relatively easy to measure, online advertising may be used to achieve maximum effectiveness when targeted in specific ways (Liu-Thompkins, 2019:2). Even though targeted advertisements provide information that benefits consumers, many consumers dislike being tracked, which can result in negative consumer attitudes based on the intrusiveness of these advertisements (De Keyzer *et al.*, 2021:15). Their perception is that the advertisements that flood their screens are irrelevant and obtrusive, leading to an increase in advertisement avoidance (Al Khasawneh *et al.*, 2023:145). Finding the right balance between what is considered appropriate and what is considered over-optimised can prove to be a challenge for advertisers and their intermediaries. The ability to target consumers to a point that can be considered “hyper-targeting” can show great initial returns but could result in the long-term detriment of a brand (Fulgoni, 2018:8). Understanding consumers’ attitudes towards online advertising is becoming increasingly important for marketers, particularly young consumers. The scandal involving Cambridge Analytica's misuse of sensitive Facebook user data to tailor advertisements for optimising online advertisement campaigns (Fuller, 2019:17) highlights the need for research data-based customisation of online advertisements.

While the usefulness and probable effectiveness of these strategies can be asserted, limited literature explores how remarketing and retargeting strategies influence consumer purchase intentions (Kikasu *et al.*, 2023:6). This is especially true for the South African consumer market. The retargeted advertising debate hinges on whether the business model influences the consumer purchase decision or not (Fulgoni, 2018:8). Personalisation through behavioural targeting as an advertising strategy has become widely accepted by organisations to position their brands prominently in consumers' decision-making processes. Several indicators can be used to forecast if online shoppers will feel happy with the usage of their personal information based on how they logically behave when it comes to privacy. Marketers see strong results from retargeting advertisements and continue to invest in them (Evergage 2019), while academic research shows that retargeting advertisements can positively influence attention, attitudes and purchase decisions (Bang & Woidynski 2016:870; Bartsch & Klob, 2019:352; Matz *et al.*, 2017:12714). Since retargeting raises privacy concerns, a sense of trust between the seller and the consumer is crucial.

As a departure point to address this research problem, as with most technology-based research, this study uses the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Davis, 1986:322). Building on this foundational model, this study further includes several important factors, namely business factors related to online shopping, perceived value and perceived risk factors associated with

remarketing and retargeting strategies, consumers' awareness of the latter strategies and the conditions that need to be met before consumers will commit to online purchases. In accordance with these aims, it is vital to provide an overview of the literature that will guide this study.

1.3 Conceptual framework

Leedy and Ormrod (2014:70) describe a literature review as any research related to the phenomenon being studied. Over the past 30 years, researchers have focused on identifying factors that promote the integration of technology into the business landscape (Manyika *et al.*, 2011:2). This section will review the existing literature by discussing findings which are relevant to the purpose of this study. Taking into consideration all the aspects written in the literature review, a conceptual framework was constructed to address the gap in the existing research.

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) and its extensions, including the theory of planned behaviour and the TAM, have been used to analyse various human behaviours (Ajzen, 1991:198; Ajzen, 1985:16; Davis, 1986:322; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975:902). As a result, the TAM recognises that attitudes influence intentions, which in turn determine buying behaviour.

The TAM has been extensively researched and expanded by various scholars to assess user acceptance and use of technology, impacting behavioural intentions. Initially created to explain and predict individual computer usage behaviour, which in turn affects users' attitudes, intentions and actual computer adoption behaviour (Davis, 1986:325), the TAM model offers a valuable framework. When applied to social media, it is logical to draw on the TAM model's concepts, as users need a fundamental understanding of the Internet and computer technology. Several studies have been conducted using the TAM which has led to changes in the original proposed model. Davis (1986:330) investigated and validated three theoretical constructs, namely perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU) and intention to use technology, which later was adapted to predict consumers' online shopping behaviour (Gefen *et al.*, 2003:60). The TAM has been greatly applied in online purchase research, where it has been used as the foundation of consumer acceptance of e-shopping and studies that have extended the TAM in the same context (Hakkak *et al.*, 2013: 2795; Lim & Ting, 2012:49; Putro & Haryanto, 2015:5). According to Wang (2017:66), the TAM can be applied to study the purchase intentions of Internet users, as they exhibit characteristics of both traditional consumers and information system users.

1.3.1 Online purchase intention

Encouraging consumers to purchase goods and services is the main role of an advertisement (Sutherland, 2020:2). In the realm of advertising, online purchase intention describes how consumers decide to buy a product or service as a result of seeing advertisements (Peña-García

et al., 2020:2). Remarketing empowers marketers to track those consumers who have been to the business's website but left without placing an order or making a purchase (Winkler, 2015). By targeting these consumers with designed advertisements, remarketing brings these consumers back to a business's website, with the intention to encourage an order or purchase. Martins *et al.* (2019:380) suggest that a higher purchase intention correlates with a greater likelihood of making a purchase. Essentially, when consumers have a positive purchase intention, positive engagement will further encourage that purchase (Nguyen *et al.*, 2022:6).

1.3.2 Awareness of remarketing and retargeting strategies

Using remarketing or retargeting is one of the cheapest means for organisations to raise brand awareness (Sukhenko, 2022). Consumers gain awareness of online behavioural advertising through advertisements, conversations with friends, or their work (Dehling *et al.*, 2019:1). Dehling *et al.* (2019:7) summarise their research in a process model that connects consumer awareness and understanding of online behavioural advertising with their attitudes towards it. This model reveals that consumer perceptions of online behavioural advertising are dynamic, and continuously evolving through interactions with such advertisements. Accordingly, Samat *et al.* (2017:299) found no effect of awareness on attitudes and purchase intentions towards advertised products and services, whereas Maria *et al.* (2019:107) and Sivaram *et al.* (2019:235) reveal that the effectiveness of advertising and awareness have a direct and significant positive effect on the intention to purchase. Given the discrepancies of these findings, this study aimed to determine whether consumers' awareness of retargeting and remarketing strategies had a direct influence on attitudes, which is subsequently argued to indirectly influence online purchase intentions.

1.3.3 Consumer attitudes

According to Sander *et al.* (2021:430), attitude is an inherent tendency to react positively or negatively towards a specific idea, object, person, or situation. Furthermore, Venkatesh *et al.* (2003:436) define attitudes towards technology as an individual's general affective or emotional response to using a particular system. The attitudes towards advertisement model are used to regulate the efficiency and effectiveness of advertising, the purchase intent and attitudes towards the brand (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989:48). As part of the several multi-attribute attitudes models, this study appropriately referred to the "attitudes towards the advertisement model", since retargeting and remarketing strategies commonly include advertisements to get consumers' attention and influence their decision-making.

Thus, this section elaborates, independently, on consumers' online shopping attitudes as a departure point, followed by attitudes towards the advertisement, which subsequently entails attitudes towards remarketing and attitudes towards retargeting strategies.

1.3.3.1 Attitudes toward online shopping

Online shopping is used as a means of contact and e-commerce to increase or improve value, quality and attractiveness by providing benefits and greater consumer satisfaction (Miao *et al.*, 2022:2190). In the context of online shopping, Sivaram *et al.* (2019:235) reveal that consumers will adopt online shopping only if they perceive a significant relative advantage over traditional shopping. Although online shopping has many benefits (Business Tech, 2022), online shopping in South Africa accounts for only two percent of the total retail sector, 14 percent less than the global average, indicating a massive opportunity for growth. Undoubtedly, the coronavirus epidemic has contributed to some of this growth (Kibuacha, 2021).

1.3.3.2 Attitude towards the advertisement

Advertisements seen online are more likely to reach their intended audience because marketers can more easily achieve their objectives by advertising on social media (Zhu & Kanjanamekanant, 2021:42). Attitudes towards advertisements are characterised by a predisposition to react positively or negatively to a specific advertising stimulus in a given exposure scenario (Lutz, 1985; Sander *et al.*, 2021:430). It has also been concluded that frequent online users tend to hold strong beliefs and attitudes towards online advertising, which are more likely to lead to increased purchase intentions (Joo & Teng, 2017:35). A consumer's evaluation of an advertisement is shaped by their attitude towards it (Arora & Agarwal, 2019:60). Marketing professionals can use their knowledge of consumers' attitudes and therefore structure their advertising efforts, which in turn can affect a consumer's attitudes towards the brand and their advertisements (Gaber *et al.* 2019).

1.3.3.3 Attitudes towards remarketing

Remarketing, which is ultimately a customised kind of marketing, is designed to display advertisements to consumers at strategic times and platforms with the unique ability to help businesses appear to be "everywhere" without exceeding their budget (Dollwet, 2020:16). Online buyers agree that they are ready to accept advertising as soon as it allows them to save money on their purchases, which is better tolerated at the beginning and end of the purchase journey, as they are considered less intrusive at these times (Kedet, 2021). Some Internet users want to see the advertisements disappear, while others see them as an excellent tool for finding good deals.

After a consumer leaves an organisation's website or selling platform, the chance of making revenue is slim. Remarketing can influence consumer behaviour by decreasing the chances of consumers being distracted by other advertisements and considering competitors. Pathak and Waghmare (2020:14088) identified a strong correlation between remarketing and purchase intentions. However, despite its potential to boost purchase intentions, factors such as privacy concerns and annoyances may prevent consumers from surrendering to advertisement temptations (Yildirim, 2021:37). With the correct and creative remarketing practices, a positive effect can be created in the attitudes of consumers and the purchase intent and behaviours can be directed.

1.3.3.4 Attitudes towards retargeting

Retargeting effectively provides consumers with tailored offers (Jung, 2017:306). The data on retargeting efficiency shows that retargeting is an effective tool that benefits businesses by converting their consumers (Johansson & Wengberg, 2017:7; Kaulina & Kaulins, 2018:14), increasing return on investment (ROI) (Reena & Udit, 2020:15) and boosting purchase intentions (Karasu Akça, 2018). However, there are still doubts about its efficiency and consumer reactions towards retargeting (Kushwaha *et al.*, 2021:7). As such, both positive and negative outcomes exist from personalised advertisements (Johansson & Wengberg, 2017:15).

By depositing “cookies” on consumers' computers and recording IP addresses, online advertisers have obtained the ability to track consumers' behaviour, which provides data for personalising pages and creating offers and prices that match the behavioural characteristics of these consumers (Tudoran, 2019:150; Zarouali *et al.*, 2017:160). While these advertisements often align with consumers' interests and rekindle their desire for previously viewed products, they can also arouse suspicion (Wen *et al.*, 2022:207) and irritation (De Battista *et al.*, 2021:58), potentially diminishing purchase intentions. According to Zarouali *et al.* (2017:159), retargeted advertisements lead to a higher purchase intention among consumers than non-retargeted advertisements.

Regardless of how consumers feel about remarketing and retargeting strategies, other conditions must be in place for them to convert.

1.3.4 Conversion conditions

In this study, the conversion conditions construct refers to the collective term describing several prerequisites that had to be met before a consumer converts from an online browser to a committed purchaser after being exposed to remarketing and retargeting strategies. In essence, online shopping conversion can be regarded as the process through which a potential consumer

becomes an actual consumer (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021). The term conversion conditions originates from earlier research examining how retargeting mobile advertising influences consumers' purchase intentions in Ireland (Nishida, 2016:25). While this study did not reference the construct describing the items used, the logical conclusion drawn was that conversion conditions were the most appropriate term to use. In this study, the question posed was, "After browsing a product or service on the Internet and receiving a targeted mobile advertisement of that particular product/service, how likely would you be to buy it?". This question can easily be interpreted as purchase likelihood, yet the responses offered included, for example, "If the message is personalised and relevant, if the message is from a brand you trust" along with four other conditions. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale from very likely to very unlikely, instead of a simple yes or no, to assess the degree of conversion likelihood under specific conditions. Consequently, this study adapted this construct for its purposes.

In line with the question phrasing, this study argued that conversion conditions could significantly impact consumers' online purchase intentions following exposure to remarketing and retargeting advertisements, be they positive or negative. Another logical assumption was that if a consumer was not aware or did not pay attention to retargeting and remarketing strategies, the effect of such efforts could not be linked to their purchase behaviour. Similarly, it is widely accepted that consumers' attitudes have a profound influence on their behavioural intentions (Ajzen, 1991), in this case, online purchase intentions. Yet, if certain conditions are not met in terms of retargeting and remarketing strategies, then the likelihood of online shopping conversions declines. Based on prior research that found a link between online advertising, which investigated forms of conversion conditions and purchase intention (Joo & Teng, 2017:135; Kaulina & Kaulins, 2018:16; Pathak & Waghmare, 2020:14088), this study aimed to determine whether conversion conditions had a direct influence on online purchase intentions.

Different studies show that retargeted advertisements can cause privacy concerns (Boerman *et al.*, 2017:370 Johansson & Wengberg, 2017:15) and create intrusiveness (Yang *et al.*, 2015:1845), as well as generate doubts about a website (Saahar *et al.*, 2019:34), thus making retargeted advertisements unattractive to consumers.

1.3.5 Perceived value

Value, as defined by Holbrook (2002:23), is the relative preference for an interactive experience between a subject and an object. To foster positive consumer attitudes, organisations should create added value and adjust their online behavioural advertising practices before consumer attitudes change (Dehling *et al.*, 2019:4). Ducoffe (1996:21) formulated the three starting-point factors, which define how consumers value advertising and form attitudes towards

advertisements. The three constructs are informativeness, irritation and entertainment. According to Logan *et al.* (2012:164), there is a connection between these three factors where each of these factors significantly influences behaviour and the effectiveness of advertisements. The belief that advertising is a cause of annoyance is thought to be connected to negative attitudes towards advertising (Mahmoud, 2014:401). Shareef *et al.* (2017:60) assert that if any aspect of an advertisement irritates consumers, they are likely to reject it. It was discovered that irritation had a detrimental effect on how consumers felt about online advertisements (Aslam *et al.*, 2021:60; Mahmoud, 2014:401). Dar *et al.* (2014:65) highlight that entertainment and irritation play a key role in advertisement value assessment, while the informativeness of web advertising has no significant role in value assessment and attitudes towards advertising. Contrary to Dar *et al.* (2014:65), the results from Brahim (2016:2) indicate that informativeness positively affects consumers' perceived value of online advertising, with no direct significant effect of perceived value on purchase intention. This study determined perceived value through consumers' perceived informativeness of remarketing and retargeting advertisements.

1.3.5.1 Informativeness

Usefulness is seen as a key factor in why consumers embrace new technology (Albayati *et al.*, 2020:3). Davis (1986:328) explains that usefulness is the degree to which individuals believe a particular system will boost their job performance. The acceptance of computing facilities by consumers is a core aspect of the technology acceptance model. Akar and Dalgic (2018:475) highlight that perceived usefulness is the extent to which an innovation is seen as easy to understand or operate, while Akhtar *et al.* (2016:387) define perceived usefulness (PU) as how individuals view technology's potential to improve their tasks or roles in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Mir and Ur Rehman (2013:367) suggest that perceived usefulness positively impacts consumer attitudes towards user-generated content on YouTube, whereas Zarrad and Debabi (2015:53) note a negative correlation between perceived usefulness and online purchase intention. Trustworthy websites might increase consumer trust and encourage online purchases (Tripathi, 2014:43). Retargeting effectiveness hinges on both consumer-related factors and advertiser-controlled elements, like the personalisation of advertisements and advertiser transparency (Boerman *et al.*, 2017:370).

With the TAM being the foundational theory of this study, it should be noted that perceived usefulness from the original model was substituted with informativeness to contextualise it for remarketing and retargeting strategies. Therefore, the foundational meaning of perceived usefulness is interpreted from the degree of informativeness consumers associate with remarketing and retargeting strategies. This study aimed to determine whether consumers'

perceived informativeness of remarketing and retargeting strategies directly influenced their attitudes towards these strategies.

1.3.6 Perceived risk

Consumers are risk averse and want to maximise value from every purchase they make (Tao *et al.*, 2022:4). Pathak and Pathak (2017:33) define perceived risk as consumers' perception regarding the hesitation and adverse effects of engaging in a purchasing activity. The higher the perception of risk perceived by consumers, the less their intention will be to shop online, which implies that perceived risk deters consumers from shopping online. Despite the potential opportunity for e-commerce market growth in South Africa, some consumers still have concerns regarding privacy, while others worry about product deliveries (Business Tech, 2018). Makhitha and Ngoben (2021:1) indicate that privacy risk was found to influence attitudes towards online shopping compared to product risk and delivery risk, which do not influence attitudes towards online shopping. This leaves businesses with a challenge to adapt their digital and marketing strategies. This study examined how privacy concerns and intrusiveness impact South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies.

1.3.6.1 Privacy concerns

Stone *et al.* (1983:459) consider privacy as a consumer's ability to control sensitive information. The term privacy concerns refers to a psychological condition of anxiety resulting from potential privacy loss (Youn & Shin, 2019:30). According to Lina and Setiyanto (2021:150), consumers' repurchase intentions will be negatively impacted by their level of privacy concerns, while consumers with low levels of privacy concerns may have high levels of repurchase intentions and contribute to rising consumer satisfaction. The use of cookies and pixel monitoring to collect user data for behavioural retargeting can raise privacy concerns, including the potential for data abuse. According to Antón *et al.* (2010:24), consumers' privacy concerns grow when they divulge their private information online for purposes such as e-commerce or other activities. Tucker (2012:327) adds that excessively intrusive advertising can reduce the advertisements' effectiveness. Additionally, the use of data is said to significantly improve the efficacy of online advertising, despite privacy concerns, which may make some advertisements less effective (Kantola, 2014).

1.3.6.2 Intrusiveness

With online consumers constantly sharing their personal details and Internet cookies tracking every click, marketers are now able to target consumers with tailor-made advertisements (Germelmann *et al.*, 2020:149). Retargeting has garnered a negative reputation due to consumer

irritation with display advertisements that ‘follow’ them after website visits (Moth, 2014). The annoyance from targeted advertisements, which use previously collected personal data, heightens consumer scepticism, leading to a greater avoidance of remarketing (Aiolfi *et al.*, 2021:1095). Moreover, Ham (2017:632) notes that consumers' likelihood of avoiding targeted advertisements may depend on marketers' perceived persuasive intent. If consumers view the intent as manipulative, privacy concerns outweigh the potential relevance benefits, making them more likely to avoid such advertisements altogether (Ham, 2017:632).

Studies undertaken by Mogaji *et al.* (2020:5) and Perraud (2011:3) examined how consumers view the intrusiveness of digital advertising formats. Consequently, some formats give consumers a negative impression of intrusiveness. Additionally, intrusiveness results in consumers developing negative attitudes towards organisations, their advertisements and the advertising format used.

1.3.7 Online business factors

To extend the TAM, this study incorporated organisational factors influencing consumer behaviour. The study theorised that factors such as website design, online review attitudes and quality, online retailer trust and reputation influence South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, as well as their online purchase intentions.

1.3.7.1 Website design

An organisation's website is a tool used to facilitate information exchange with consumers about what it offers, where the intent is to achieve some form of conversion. Website design features encompass the components, elements and information utilised in crafting a website (Xu-Priour *et al.*, 2017:300). Website design features are crucial because they have the power to turn a consumer's mindset around, making them more likely to make a purchase (Jeon *et al.*, 2017:130). A well-planned remarketing strategy can draw potential consumers back to business websites, preventing them from slipping away (Davey, 2022). According to Aakash and Aggarwal (2019:148), consumers using a service provider website with an online store must consider several website attributes when making purchase-related decisions. Consumers using online social networks may also make repeat purchases from websites to which they feel an affective connection (Soni, 2021:28). As a result, this study explored whether website quality and design affected consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies used by online retailers as well as their intent to make online purchases as it is a great way to re-engage distracted shoppers.

The success of a business in the e-commerce sector is significantly influenced by the standard of its website design (Priscillia & Budiono, 2020:1033). It has been widely acknowledged that aesthetic qualities and informative website content are significant factors in the quality of online retail (Kalia, 2017:645). Website design and quality have been found to directly influence consumers' attitudes towards online purchases (Akar & Dalgic, 2018:480; Soni, 2021:20), the perception of the e-commerce business (Lorenzo-Romero *et al.*, 2011:176), consumer satisfaction, loyalty (Priscillia & Budiono, 2020:1033) and purchase intentions (McDowell *et al.* 2016:4837). This review of the literature aided in identifying most of the variables influencing online purchase decisions. Unfortunately, prior knowledge about website design and the effect of remarketing on consumers' purchase decisions is limited. As an interpretation of the TAM model, web design and quality, specifically the ease of navigation is synonymous with PEOU. Another underrated aspect influencing online purchase intentions is online reviews.

1.3.7.2 Online review attitudes and quality

According to Floh *et al.* (2013:647), online reviews are the sum of consumer experiences, attitudes and opinions that enable interactions between businesses and consumers who create, post and review information before making online purchase-related decisions. The connection between online reviews and decision-making has been investigated in the past and it has been established that online reviews have an impact on consumers' intentions to make purchases (Cheung & Thadani, 2012:468; Luo & Ye, 2019:250). Online reviews are defined by three elements, quantity, quality and credibility. Depending on previous consumer experiences, the volume of online reviews may be viewed as either good or bad, depending on the previous experience of the consumers (Bataineh, 2015:126). Potential consumers' purchase decisions depend on the volume of published opinions (Lee *et al.*, 2008:345), where consumers often post objective and clear opinions. The first stages of the persuading process depend heavily on the credibility of the consumers posting the reviews (Hilligoss & Rieh, 2008:1470). Credibility is, therefore, a crucial concept when considering the influence of word-of-mouth (WOM) (Ventre & Kolbe, 2020:290). As such, the increasing perception of risks diverts consumers from online shopping to brick-and-mortar shops. Thus, this study sought to assess whether consumers' attitudes towards online reviews and their perceived quality influenced their attitudes towards remarketing/retargeting and their online purchase intentions.

1.3.7.3 E-trust

Online trust refers to the disposition of a consumer of being vulnerable to the actions of a seller when realising online transactions (Gibreel *et al.*, 2018:156). A significant obstacle to e-commerce adoption is believed to be a lack of trust (Kim & Park, 2013:18). Due to its impersonal nature, trust

plays a crucial role in e-commerce, aiding consumers in overcoming their perceived risks. Studies have shown that consumers' willingness to participate in e-commerce is influenced by their trust in electronic media (Singh & Srivastava, 2018:357). Evidence of a strong bond of confidence has been found to have a favourable impact on online purchase intentions in Kuwait, an emerging market (Gibreel *et al.*, 2018:156). On the other hand, it has been discovered that low trust in emerging e-commerce marketplaces reduces consumers' willingness to make online purchases (Wagner Mainardes *et al.*, 2019:447). As such, this study aimed to determine how e-trust influences consumers' attitudes towards remarketing/retargeting and their online purchase intentions.

1.3.7.4 E-reputation

A respectable reputation and an appealing appearance are imperative for organisations that wish to maintain a competitive advantage for organisations. The term reputation can be used to describe an assessment of a business's potential value or appeal made by an outside group of people (Esenyel, 2020:30). Creating a solid image using remarketing or retargeting is crucial to establishing a business's brand in the online market (Aparicio *et al.*, 2021:2). With the ever-changing landscape of digital advertisements, the fight for new consumers' attention must be won with not just quantity, but also with quality. With the expansion of e-commerce and increasing Internet fraud, consumers are becoming more cautious, looking for information about the e-commerce business before making any purchase-related decisions (Aparicio *et al.* 2021:4). E-reputation arises from the assessment of online communities, their intrinsic motivation and the retention of online content (Matriadi, 2021:40). Varma *et al.* (2020:119) suggest that a business's reputation greatly impacts the online purchase intentions of e-commerce consumers. This study aimed to confirm this relationship and also examine the influence of e-reputation on consumers' attitudes towards remarketing/retargeting.

1.3.8 Interrelationship between constructs

The literature overview provided several interrelationships between the identified variables. This study investigated specific interrelationships and direct paths, the first being South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting advertisements and their intentions to purchase from online retailers. This relationship has been well-documented in the literature, as derived from the TAM model. From this model, this study replaced perceived usefulness with the informativeness of advertisements, since remarketing and retargeting advertisements ought to provide useful and valuable information. Informativeness is then theorised to influence consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting advertisements, with the subsequent expectation of this interrelationship to influence their online purchase intentions. Furthermore,

perceived ease of use can be linked to web design factors, since e-commerce sites use websites that ought to be easy to navigate and find information about products. This is theorised to interrelate the same way as informativeness does with attitudes. Other business factors, namely online reviews, e-trust and e-reputation were also theorised to impact consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting advertisements, which, again, is thought to influence their consequent online purchase intentions. Yet, there are risks associated with online shopping and this study also investigated the interrelationship between privacy concerns and intrusiveness associated with remarketing and retargeting advertisements and consumers' attitudes towards these strategies and the extent to which these elements will impact their online purchase intentions. The awareness of retargeting and remarketing strategies as a direct influence on attitudes was investigated. With all the factors considered, this study further highlighted certain conversion conditions associated with remarketing and retargeting advertisements and determined their direct influence on consumers' likelihood of making purchases online.

1.4 Research objectives

Based on the literature review and problem statement, the following objectives were formulated:

1.4.1 Primary objective

This study's primary objective was to develop and empirically test a framework that examines the factors affecting South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, as well as their online purchase intentions.

1.4.2 Theoretical objectives

To achieve the primary objective, the ensuing theoretical objectives were formulated:

Outline the differences between e-commerce and brick-and-mortar consumer behaviour.

Conduct a literature review of the e-commerce context globally and in South Africa.

Outline the process of e-commerce conversions and factors influencing them.

Critically assess the sales process, particularly the sales funnel and conversion funnel in the e-commerce context.

Review the literature on remarketing and retargeting strategies, particularly the definitions, examples, as well as the benefits and challenges associated with these strategies.

Analyse the potential attitudinal and behavioural models relevant to e-commerce engagement.

Investigate the possible factors that influence consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies.

Review the literature pertaining to the influence of remarketing and retargeting attitudes on South African consumers' online purchase intentions.

Determine South African consumers' perceptions of conversion conditions, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation concerning their attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions.

1.4.3 Empirical objectives

Based on the primary objective, the study addressed the following empirical objectives:

Determine South African consumers' awareness of remarketing and retargeting strategies, their attitudes towards them and their online purchase intentions.

Determine South African consumers' perceptions of conversion conditions, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation concerning their attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions.

Determine the statistical significance of South African consumers' perceptions of conversion conditions, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation concerning their attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions.

Determine the influence of conversion conditions, awareness, attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and e-commerce business factors (website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation) on South African consumers' online purchase intentions.

Determine the influence of perceived value (informativeness), perceived risk (privacy concerns and intrusiveness) and e-commerce business factors (website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation) on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting.

Determine if South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and online purchase intentions are a 13-factor model.

Empirically test a proposed framework of the factors (awareness, conversion conditions, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, website design, online review attitudes and

quality, e-trust and e-reputation) influencing South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions.

1.5 Hypotheses

From the empirical objectives outlined in this study, nine hypotheses will be tested to support the primary objective. Figure 1.1 presents the proposed framework for this research.

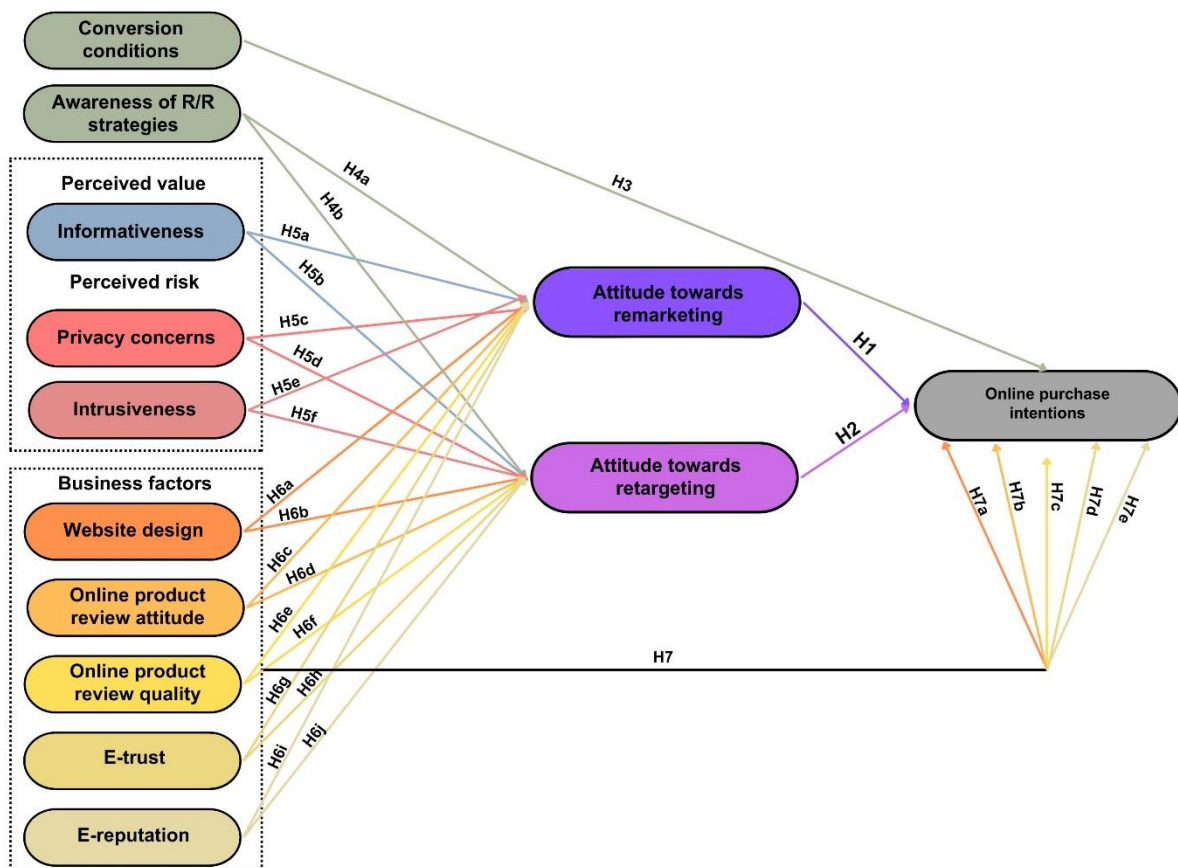


Figure 1.1: Proposed framework

In accordance with the literature review and empirical objectives, this study tested the hypotheses indicated in Figure 1.1, as outlined below:

- H1: South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing have a significant direct influence on their online purchase intentions.
- H2: South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting have a significant direct influence on their online purchase intentions.
- H3: Conversion conditions South African consumers associate with remarketing and retargeting have a significant direct influence on their online purchase intentions.

- H4a: South African consumers' awareness of remarketing and retargeting has a significant direct influence on their attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H4b: South African consumers' awareness of remarketing and retargeting has a significant direct influence on their attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H5a: The informativeness of remarketing and retargeting has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H5b: The informativeness of remarketing and retargeting has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H5c: Privacy concerns associated with online shopping have a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H5d: Privacy concerns associated with online shopping have a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H5e: The perceived intrusiveness of remarketing and retargeting has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H5f: The perceived intrusiveness of remarketing and retargeting has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H6a: Online retailers' website design has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H6b: Online retailers' website design has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H6c: South African consumers' attitudes towards online product reviews have a significant direct influence on their remarketing strategy attitudes.
- H6d: South African consumers' attitudes towards online product reviews have a significant direct influence on their retargeting strategy attitudes.
- H6e: The quality of online product reviews has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H6f: The quality of online product reviews has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H6g: Online retailer trust has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H6h: Online retailer trust has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H6i: Online retailer reputation has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.

- H6j: Online retailer reputation has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H7a: Online retailers' website design has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' online purchase intentions.
- H7b: South African consumers' attitudes towards online product reviews have a significant direct influence on their online purchase intentions.
- H7c: The quality of online product reviews has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' online purchase intentions.
- H7d: Online retailer trust has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' online purchase intentions.
- H7e: Online retailer reputation has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' online purchase intentions.
- H8: South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions are a 13-factor structure comprising attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, online purchase intentions, awareness, conversion conditions, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, website design, online review attitudes, online review quality, online retailer reputation and trust.

1.6 Research methodology

The study encompassed both a literature review and an empirical investigation. For the empirical part, it employed quantitative research using the survey method. It followed a descriptive research design with a cross-sectional sample.

1.6.1 Literature investigation

To support the empirical study, a review of both the South African and international literature was undertaken. This involved consulting secondary data sources such as the Internet, textbooks, business journal articles, academic journal articles and online academic databases, including Google Scholar, Lexis Nexis, Emerald Insight Journals, Scopus, Sabinet and the institution's repository.

1.6.2 Empirical investigation

In this section, the primary data required to address the empirical objectives and answer the hypotheses are presented.

1.6.2.1 Research design

The primary aim of this study was to explore and empirically test a framework of factors impacting South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, along with their online purchase intentions. A descriptive research design and cross-sectional approach was chosen for this purpose. According to Hair *et al.* (2013b:36), descriptive research involves gathering data to answer research questions, addressing the who, what, when, where and how of the topic. Cross-sectional studies capture feedback from a sample within a population, unlike longitudinal studies, which repeatedly measure the same sample units over time (Wiid & Diggins, 2013). This cross-sectional study was ideal because participants remained anonymous and could not be identified or contacted for follow-up investigations.

1.6.2.2 Target population

This study targeted South African consumers born between 1966 and 2005, which in 2024 meant they would be aged 19 to 58 years, had experience with online shopping and were officially registered with social media accounts on Facebook, LinkedIn or WhatsApp.

This study defined its target population as follows:

Element: South African consumers from the general population between the ages of 19 and 58 with online shopping experience

Sampling unit: Social media sites, namely Facebook, LinkedIn or WhatsApp, frequented by South African consumers

Extent: South Africa

Time: January to May 2024

1.6.2.3 Sampling method

The sampling method aligned with the research design, which in this study aimed to collect quantitative data. To gather large volumes of data, the sampling procedure involved identifying appropriate recruitment portals that matched the nature of the study. The relevant sampling methods employed included non-probability, purposive and snowball sampling.

First, the procedure involved targeting adult South African consumers with online shopping experiences and officially registered social media accounts. Three appropriate social media platforms were selected as recruitment portals, namely WhatsApp, Facebook and LinkedIn as selected from the 15 most frequented social media sites in South Africa, including WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, Twitter, TikTok, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Telegram,

Snapchat, Skype, Reddit, iMessage, Tumblr and Discord (Statista, 2023d). The rationale for choosing WhatsApp, Facebook and LinkedIn as the three recruitment portals are based on the fact that, in 2021, 95 percent of South African Internet users were active on WhatsApp, making it the most popular social media platform. In addition, the potential South African audience on Facebook that can be targeted with advertisements totalled 24.2 million (Statista, 2023a). Also, in 2022, an estimated 10.2 million South African users accessed LinkedIn monthly (Statista, 2023b). Furthermore, these three social media platforms were the easiest for distributing questionnaire information and links to the target sample, as opposed to the other social media platforms that were not selected. The rationale for this choice is elaborated in the discussion on data collection.

According to Hair *et al.* (2018:380), purposive sampling, which was used in this study, entails “selecting sample members to study because they possess attributes important to understanding the research topic.” As such, in this study, data were only collected from a non-probability purposive sample, which comprised South African consumers aged 19 to 58 years.

The inclusion criteria justifying a purposive sampling technique are outlined below:

Respondents must live in South Africa

Respondents must be born between 1966 and 2005

Respondents must have had an online shopping experience

Respondents must have had an officially registered social media account, be it on WhatsApp, Facebook or LinkedIn.

To boost the response rate, the study employed snowball sampling. In this method, the researcher selects an initial group of participants at random, who then identify other potential participants within the targeted population (Clow & James, 2014:234). In this study, the researcher narrowed the population to a purposive sample. Following this, in the recruitment post on two recruitment portals, namely Facebook and LinkedIn, this purposive sample was asked to distribute the recruitment material and survey link to qualifying members within their network. They could share the material on these platforms or be encouraged to use WhatsApp as this secures direct and speedy communication. The researcher refrained from distributing the questionnaire within their immediate network to avoid sample and response bias. The snowball effect relied on the cooperation of the primary target sample.

1.6.2.4 Sample size

The sample size is a key factor in research. McCarthy *et al.* (2017:8) explain that while larger samples decrease sampling error, they also increase the costs and time needed for data

collection. Researchers must balance these practical considerations. For this study, a sample size of 450 South African consumers was considered suitable due to the number of questionnaire items, the intended statistical analysis procedures and alignment with previous research. While the study aimed to obtain 450 valid responses, the minimum number required was 290 cases, based on the 5-to-1 principle (Memon *et al.* 2020:5). This principle suggests that five responses per item are ideal for structural equation modelling (SEM). With 58 items in the questionnaire, multiplying by five yields 290 cases. Additionally, the target of 450 responses was consistent with prior studies. For example, Arya *et al.* (2019:158) used 421 respondents and Chawla and Kumar (2022:589) targeted 432 subjects.

1.6.2.5 Measurement instrument

A structured, computer-administered or online questionnaire was employed to collect the data for this study. The questionnaire featured five sections, beginning with a cover page that outlined the study's nature, purpose and significance. It also included key information about the Protection of Personal Information (PoPI) Act, an informed consent section and four screening questions. These screening questions were linked to the inclusion criteria as defined by the purposive sampling method guiding the study.

Section A comprised five questions to obtain specific demographical information, presented in Annexure A. To gain deeper demographic insights, respondents were asked to specify their province of residence, gender, age, preferred language and gross monthly income (before tax deductions). There were seven questions in Section B that related to the sample's online shopping background information. The respondents had to indicate their top three preferred online shopping sites, how often they browse and purchase online, their top five preferred online shopping categories and whether they used their mobile and email to sign up for online shopping profiles/accounts, with the last question requiring them to rank their top three most used social and digital media platforms. Section C included a definition and explanation of the differences between remarketing and retargeting to ensure that respondents had a clear understanding of these concepts. A table with relevant information was provided to guide respondents in completing the statements presented in the rest of the questionnaire. Section C aimed to measure respondents' awareness of remarketing and retargeting advertisements (three items) adapted from Song *et al.* (2021:6). It also assessed their attitudes towards remarketing (three items) and retargeting (three items), independently adapted from Ozcelik and Varnali (2019b). Additionally, respondents' online purchase intentions were measured using four items adapted from Nguyen *et al.* (2022:8). This section further included a six-item scale, adapted from Nishida (2016:26),

addressing conditions that should be in place for consumers to be willing to make an online purchase resulting from remarketing and retargeting strategies.

Section D contained scaled items sourced from previously published and validated research to identify the factors that influence South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting and remarketing, as well as their online purchase intentions. Section D was divided into two major sub-sections, covering nine factors theorised to influence South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting. The first sub-section focused on the perceived value and risks associated with remarketing and retargeting strategies. The first factor was the informativeness (four items) of remarketing and retargeting advertisements, representing a perceived value factor, with the scale adapted from Nguyen *et al.* (2022). The next two factors related to the perceived risk: privacy concerns (five items), adapted from Strycharz *et al.* (2019:14) and intrusiveness (five items), adapted from Lin and Kim (2016:713). The second sub-section addressed five online business factors theorised to influence consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies and online purchase intentions. The first factor, website design of online retailers (five items), was adapted from Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003). The second factor, online reviews, was two sub-factors, namely online review attitudes (six items) and review quality (six items), both adapted from Park *et al.* (2007). The final two business-related factors were e-trust (five items), adapted from Wen *et al.* (2011) and e-business reputation (three items), adapted from Aparicio *et al.* (2021:4).

The 58 items were measured on a six-point Likert scale, where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 6 = "strongly agree" for all items. The measurement instrument is provided in Appendix A.

1.6.2.6 Data collection

Data collection involves gathering information from respondents to address the research problem, objectives and hypotheses (Harrison *et al.*, 2016:6093). In this study, primary data were gathered through a computer-administered or online questionnaire, comprising five sections as previously mentioned. The researcher designed the questionnaire using Google Forms and submitted a Word version to the Faculty of Economic Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) for approval. Following the receipt of the ethics clearance certificate, the researcher conducted a pre-test and a paper-based pilot study to evaluate the reliability and validity of the questionnaire before creating the final online survey.

The pretesting phase of the piloting process involved sharing the questionnaire link and details with five Marketing Management academics to confirm face and content validity, followed by a pilot study. Clow and James (2014:28) recommend that a small, representative group of 20 to 30 participants, not included in the main study, should complete the pilot questionnaire. In line with

this, this study's pilot study employed a mall-intercept-type approach. The researcher, with the assistance of trained fieldworkers, targeted people with a self-administered questionnaire in public areas outside various major shopping centres in North-West and Gauteng provinces. This method did not conform to the traditional mall-survey approach, as potential respondents were only approached in public areas outside the immediate shopping centres' boundaries, making explicit permission from mall managers unnecessary. Since the aim was to establish the reliability and validity of the instrument and provide an initial report on a representative sample, the same screening questions were applied and non-conforming cases were discarded. Pilot questionnaires continued to be distributed until a viable number of 30 completed questionnaires was collected. Neither the researcher nor the fieldworkers coerced individuals to participate. Survey completion was voluntary, with possible respondents informed of the content on the cover page, including details about informed consent, the study's nature, purpose, time required for completion, anonymity and how the data would be reported. Once the questionnaire's reliability and validity were established and necessary corrections made, the researcher constructed and shared the Google Form containing vital information about the survey. The form's link was shared on the recruitment portals, as previously discussed, namely Facebook and LinkedIn, with the intention of snowballing to WhatsApp for the main data collection.

On the two former platforms, the researcher, under the supervision and guidance of her promoters, established research-based Facebook and LinkedIn profiles and dedicated pages. These pages conformed to the specifications set by the university's Corporate Relations and Marketing (CRM) department. A dedicated recruitment post was created, providing a detailed explanation of the study, emphasising voluntary participation and ensuring that no personal information was gathered, thereby guaranteeing respondents' anonymity to encourage participation. The Google Forms survey link was integrated into the post and as part of the recruitment message, respondents were encouraged to share the information with their social and professional networks on WhatsApp, creating a snowball effect to boost the response rate. Once the post was drafted and approved by the promoters and the university's CRM and ethical clearance was obtained from EMS-REC, Facebook and LinkedIn paid advertisements were executed from the researcher's dedicated research-based pages to distribute the post nationwide. The researcher covered the costs of these advertisements. This approach mitigated potential challenges in obtaining permission from specific groups/pages to distribute the link, thus saving time.

As the study used a computer-administered, online questionnaire, responses were captured and made accessible immediately after the collection period (January to May 2024) or the target of 450 cases was reached. Since Google Forms was used, the responses were automatically saved

but then transferred to an approved, encrypted cloud storage solution, Microsoft OneDrive, ensuring the safekeeping of the data. The form and data were managed through the primary promoter's account, which was protected by the institution's firewall. This ensured that respondents were accessible to the researcher and promoters immediately after completing the online questionnaire.

1.6.2.7 Data analysis

Data analysis involves interpreting data to derive conclusions that reflect the concepts, interests and theories that initiated the research (Babbie, 2013:416; Kumar, 2019:589). To analyse the collected data, IBM's SPSS and AMOS version 28 were utilised, with a focus on multivariate analysis and structural equation modelling. The following statistical techniques were applied for this study:

A Mahalanobis distance test

Frequency analysis

Factor analysis: Principal components analysis

Descriptive statistics

One sample t-test

Multicollinearity diagnostics

Correlation analysis

Reliability and validity analysis

Structural equation modelling

These techniques are discussed in Sections 4.3.10 to 4.3.13.

1.7 Contribution of the study

The present study held several theoretical and managerial contributions.

1.7.1 Theoretical contribution

The study aimed to enhance the understanding of how South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting affect their online purchase intentions. A significant contribution of this research was its pioneering effort to establish a theoretical framework identifying the factors that shape consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions, making it one of the first in South Africa to do so. This marked a

significant advancement in the e-commerce market space, providing academics with a foundational framework to build upon. Furthermore, this framework could be applied across industries and in other international contexts.

1.7.2 Managerial contribution

By offering businesses a comprehensive understanding of South African consumers' views on retargeting and remarketing, they can better align their advertising strategies with consumer preferences and perceptual biases. In line with this, the study revealed whether consumers responded better to remarketing or retargeting strategies and whether these strategies had a significant direct influence on their online purchase intentions. Furthermore, the managerial implications for e-commerce businesses targeting South African consumers are that considering the results, they can adapt their strategies and find suitable solutions based on South African consumers' responses to their awareness, the informativeness of, privacy concerns and intrusiveness associated with their remarketing and retargeting strategies. Online retailers and relevant stakeholders would also be able to ensure that they follow the conversion conditions that will improve consumers' online purchase intentions, while online businesses can ensure that their website design, online reviews, reputation and trust are enhanced. Organisations targeting the South African market can benefit from the insights from this study, given the scarce literature on South African consumers' perceptions of online retargeting and remarketing.

Detailed information about the theoretical and managerial implications and subsequent recommendations are supplied in Chapter 6.

1.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations, according to Marshall and Rossman (2011), go beyond ensuring informed consent and protecting a respondent's anonymity. Leedy and Ormrod (2014) outline four key ethical issues: ensuring protection from harm, obtaining informed consent, respecting the right to privacy and maintaining honesty with professional colleagues. This requires researchers to be emotionally firm and continually evaluate their behaviour. For this study, ethical standards were followed by gaining clearance from the North-West University, submitting the proposal and questionnaire to the relevant ethics committee (EMS-REC) and ensuring no coercion of participants. Recruitment posts on Facebook and LinkedIn included information on voluntary participation, anonymity and the PoPI Act (Act No. 4 of 2013), clarifying that no personal information was collected. The posts also detailed the time required, data reporting, storage and the presentation of results. Data were reported and stored securely and results presented as outlined in Chapter 5. When respondents shared the survey via snowball sampling, the researcher

had no knowledge of who shared it or to whom, minimising risk. The researcher remained uninvolved in distribution, avoiding ethical concerns related to sampling and response bias. Furthermore, the researcher did not receive any form of funding, rewards, or incentives from any institution external to the university. As a result, the data were not applied to or associated with any external organisations. The research was carried out independently, with no commercial or financial ties that could be seen as potential conflicts of interest.

1.9 Chapter classification

This study was structured as follows;

Chapter 2 examined the differences between e-commerce and brick-and-mortar consumer behaviour, followed by an analysis of e-commerce both internationally and in South Africa. It discussed the process and factors influencing e-commerce conversions, critically assessing the sales and conversion funnels in the e-commerce context. Chapter 3 explored remarketing and retargeting strategies, including their definitions, examples, benefits and challenges. It analysed attitudinal and behavioural models associated with e-commerce engagement and outlined the proposed factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their impact on online purchase intentions. Chapter 4 detailed the research design and methodology, including the research method, population, sampling method, data collection techniques and data analysis. It also discussed validity, reliability and ethical considerations. Chapter 5 presented the empirical findings from the quantitative study. Chapter 6 concluded with an overview of the study, the main findings, implications and contribution followed by relevant recommendations. The chapter concluded with the study's limitations, suggestions for future research directions and providing a valid conclusion.

CHAPTER 2 ONLINE CONSUMERS AND THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

2.1 Introduction

In the rapidly evolving digital age, e-commerce has emerged as a pivotal innovation in the contemporary business environment, fundamentally altering traditional business models and consumer behaviour (Gomes, 2023). This transformation is particularly significant within the South African landscape, where the growth of online shopping has opened up new opportunities and challenges for organisations and consumers alike (Go-Globe, 2023a). E-commerce revolutionises the way organisations operate and interact with customers, allowing them to reach global audiences through online platforms (Lisbino, 2024).

Developing an online presence has become critical in today's world (Laudon & Traver, 2021). Organisations increasingly integrate the internet into their operations, not only to market their products and services but also to offer them for purchase to a vast array of consumers (Lindecrantz *et al.*, 2020). The ease and comfort of online shopping have caused a notable change in consumer preferences, with more individuals opting for online shopping over traditional methods (Maugurira, 2022). Despite its advantages, e-commerce presents a mixed bag of experiences for customers, with both positive and negative aspects.

This chapter delves into various facets of e-commerce within the South African context, offering insights into the dynamics of digital transformation and its impact on consumer behaviour. It explores the different types of online consumers, their decision-making processes and their purchase journeys. Furthermore, it highlights the intricacies of the e-commerce sales and conversion funnels, along with strategic marketing strategies that influence and transform traditional decision-making behaviour. Additionally, the role of remarketing and retargeting strategies in enhancing customer engagement and driving sales is examined, alongside the benefits and challenges associated with these strategies. Understanding the dynamics of digital transformation and e-commerce is crucial for leveraging its potential in the modern business landscape. This chapter seeks to thoroughly explore these dynamics, with a particular focus on the South African context and to provide insights into the changing consumer behaviour in the e-commerce landscape.

2.2 Digital transformation and e-commerce

Digital transformation represents a comprehensive shift in how organisations leverage digital technologies to fundamentally change their operations, culture and customer experiences (Goga

et al., 2019:1). This process integrates digital technology into all areas of an organisation, resulting in significant changes in how organisations operate and deliver value to customers (Nemat, 2011:100). Digital transformation involves the adoption of digital tools and strategies to enhance organisational processes, increase efficiency and create new revenue streams (GFK, 2023). It spans a diverse array of technologies, including cloud computing, big data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) (Banda, 2019:1; Brits, 2020). These technologies enable organisations to collect and analyse vast amounts of data, automate processes and improve decision-making capabilities (Turban *et al.*, 2018:6). As organisations increasingly adopt digital transformation strategies, they can improve their agility, responsiveness and competitiveness in a rapidly changing market (Ferrera & Kessedjian, 2019:38).

E-commerce has been a significant driver of digital transformation, reshaping how organisations and consumers interact (Goga *et al.*, 2019:5). The rise of the Internet has made it possible for organisations to conduct transactions online, offering a convenient and efficient way to buy and sell goods and services (McNulty, 2024). E-commerce platforms allow organisations to reach a worldwide audience, operate around the clock and cut down on overhead expenses linked to physical storefronts (Go-Globe, 2024b). This transformation involves not only the digitalisation of the sales process but also the integration of various technologies to streamline operations (Shahjee, 2017:3130).

E-commerce platforms often use AI to personalise shopping experiences, recommend products and optimise pricing strategies (Chin & Nassauer, 2018; Turban *et al.*, 2018:6). Globally, key trends will include omnichannel retailing, AI-enhanced personalisation onwards and focus on sustainability (Go-Globe, 2023b). Additionally, advanced analytics and machine learning algorithms can help organisations understand consumer behaviour, predict trends and make data-driven decisions (Goga *et al.*, 2019:1)

The evolution of e-commerce has been marked by several key milestones (Goga *et al.*, 2019:5). The 1990s Internet boom created numerous opportunities, particularly in communication and commerce (Ferrera & Kessedjian, 2019:38). Organisations quickly adopted the Internet to share product and service information, receive orders and distribute offerings, leading to the advent of e-commerce (Turban *et al.*, 2018:6). By the early 1990s, new technologies and software had turned the Internet into a commercial platform, fundamentally changing global organisations as consumers increasingly adopted e-commerce to simplify their lives (Ferrera & Kessedjian, 2019). The launch of Amazon and eBay in 1995 heralded a new era in online shopping, with Amazon achieving significant sales in its first year (Khan, 2020). The decade that followed saw dramatic increases in global e-commerce sales, driven by the proliferation of mobile commerce and enhanced internet accessibility (eMarketer, 2011).

E-commerce in South Africa has undergone a significant transformation, driven by digital technologies that facilitate transactions between organisations and consumers (Goga *et al.*, 2019:5). This evolution mirrors the global shift in retail, where online platforms have become essential to business models (Marr, 2023). The advantages of e-commerce, including broader reach, lower costs and enhanced customer experiences have made it a key element in the modern retail landscape (Semerádová & Weinlich, 2022:3). As organisations adapt, integrating digital tools has become vital for staying competitive (Marr, 2023).

Alongside this evolution, South Africa has seen a substantial increase in Internet access and online engagement (Glim, 2023). By 2023, 68 percent of South Africans were connected to the Internet, with even higher rates in urban areas (Go-Globe, 2023). This surge in connectivity has been fuelled by affordable mobile data and the widespread adoption of smartphones (Research and Markets, 2021). These developments have created a more connected population, laying a strong foundation for expanding digital activities. The widespread use of smartphones and affordable mobile data has made Internet usage a daily habit for many South Africans (Africanews, 2023). On average, people spend 8 hours and 23 minutes online each day, underscoring the significant role of mobile technology in the country's digital ecosystem. This extensive online presence drives increased digital engagement and commerce (Haynie, 2020).

This rise in digital engagement is evident in the robust growth of online shopping, with over 77 percent of internet users aged 16 to 64 making online purchases each month (Kemp, 2021). This trend is bolstered by growing trust in online payments and improvements in logistics (Kemp, 2023). Although South Africa lags behind markets like the United States of America and China in online shopping activity (International Trade Administration, 2024), its e-commerce sector thrives in a "brick and clicks" environment, where physical and online retail complement each other (Haynie, 2020).

As digital connectivity expands, organisations in South Africa face both challenges and opportunities (Marr, 2023). The evolving consumer landscape requires organisations to enhance their digital presence and leverage social media to engage with customers (Shewale, 2024b; Kemp, 2023). E-commerce has transformed business models and operations, making agility crucial to meet the changing needs of digital consumers in this dynamic environment (Visser *et al.*, 2021a; Wongama, 2024).

The evolution of e-commerce, as depicted in Figure 2.1, highlights significant milestones from the 1960s to the 2020s (Marfice, 2020; Shirey, 2024). Early developments included the introduction of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and the founding of CompuServe in the 1960s (Marfice, 2020). The 1990s witnessed substantial growth with the public accessibility of the World Wide

Web in 1993, the first online music purchase in 1994 and the founding of major players like Amazon and eBay in 1995 (Gomes, 2023). As stated by Global Lancers (2023), significant advancements occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s, notably the launch of Netflix in 1997 and PayPal in 1998. The 2010s continued this trend with the emergence of Instacart in 2012 (Simo, 2022).

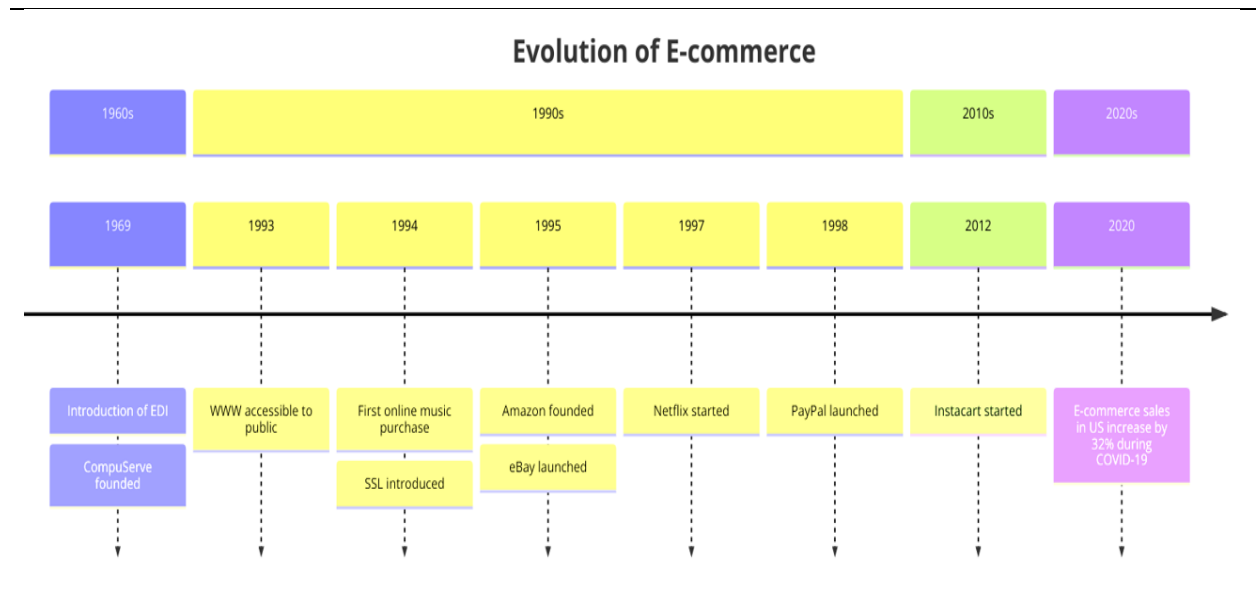


Figure 2.1: The history of e-commerce

Source: Marfice (2020); Shewale (2024a); Shirey (2024)

Since 2020, e-commerce has been undergoing significant transformation and this trend is expected to continue through 2025, driven by ongoing technological advancements and evolving market dynamics (Research and Markets, 2021). In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic greatly boosted e-commerce growth, resulting in a 32 percent rise in US e-commerce sales as consumers flocked to online shopping like never before (International Trade Administration, 2024). This surge necessitated rapid adaptation by organisations, highlighting the importance of robust online platforms (Kari, 2022).

The adoption of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) in 2021 began enhancing the e-commerce experience, allowing customers to visualise products in real-time and creating immersive shopping environments (Anderson, 2023; Kari, 2022). Blockchain technology started improving supply chain transparency and security (Teodorescu & Korchagina, 2021:80). By 2022, AI-driven automation became integral to operations, streamlining processes such as inventory management and customer service (Emley, 2024; Gaur & Gaiha, 2020).

In 2023, the focus shifted towards sustainability, with organisations adopting eco-friendly practices and integrating online and offline channels into seamless shopping experiences, known as omnichannel strategies (Go-Globe, 2023b). Emerging markets will become a focal point for growth by 2024, as organisations adapt their strategies to cater to the unique needs of these new customer bases (Fernandez-Arias *et al.*, 2024).

Looking ahead to 2025, the trends of sustainability, omnichannel strategies and expansion into emerging markets continue to shape the future of e-commerce, underscoring the industry's resilience and capacity for innovation (Emley, 2024; Fernandez-Arias *et al.*, 2024; Go-Globe, 2023a).

2.2.1 E-commerce within the South African landscape

E-commerce has become an essential part of the global economy, with its rapid growth significantly impacting the retail sector (Brits, 2020:47). As of 2022, South Africa's e-commerce market surged by 30 percent, exceeding R50 billion, spurred by advanced payment technologies and shifting consumer preferences (Mordor Intelligence, 2024; Go-Globe, 2023a). This remarkable growth reflects a broader trend in the South African retail landscape, where e-commerce is rapidly outpacing traditional retail growth rates (Gao *et al.*, 2020:578).

By 2024, the e-commerce sector is expected to continue its robust expansion, significantly surpassing the modest 1.7 percent growth observed in the physical retail sector (Murphy, 2024). The surge in e-commerce can be attributed to increased internet penetration and mobile connectivity, making online shopping accessible to a wider audience (Glim, 2023). Additionally, the widespread availability of smartphones and affordable mobile data has further driven this trend, allowing consumers to interact with digital platforms more often. Additionally, enhanced security and reliability of online transactions have bolstered consumer confidence, encouraging more people to shop online (Gao *et al.*, 2020:579).

The popularity of platforms like Superbalist and Zando, particularly for fashion items, underscores the growing demand in the online retail space (Van der Merwe, 2024). These platforms, alongside Shopify, which has enabled local organisations to establish online stores, are pivotal in facilitating South Africa's entry into the digital marketplace (Shopify, 2023). As South African consumers become more accustomed to the convenience and variety offered by online shopping, the e-commerce sector is expected to maintain its upward trajectory (Prinsloo, 2024).

Globally, e-commerce has experienced substantial increases, particularly in Europe and the United States of America (Gelder, 2024). For example, in 2017, Europe's e-tailing market was projected to reach €250 billion, while US e-tailing sales were expected to exceed \$400 billion (Niarametrics, 2024). These figures highlight the maturity and scale of e-commerce in these

regions, in contrast to South Africa's smaller yet rapidly growing market, which saw a total online spend of R37.1 billion in 2016 (Swanepoel, 2024). Despite the smaller initial market size, South Africa's e-commerce growth trajectory is significant, driven by increasing internet access and adoption of digital innovations (PwC, 2023). Consequently, South Africa's e-commerce sector has seen remarkable growth, with revenue rising from US\$2.9 billion in 2019 to an estimated US\$4.5 billion in 2021, an increase of over 55 percent in just two years (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). Projections suggest this rapid growth trend will continue, with the market expected to hit US\$6.5 billion by 2028, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.3percent from 2024 to 2028 (ECDB, 2024).

In 2020, the number of online shoppers has increased rapidly, with over 18 million registered internet users with six million people shopping online that year alone (Research and Markets, 2021). Despite this promising growth, South Africa still lags behind global leaders, ranking as the 48th largest e-commerce market globally, with a projected value of US\$4.5 billion by 2024 (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). The International Trade Administration (2024) reports that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly boosted e-commerce adoption, with online sales surging by 66 percent from 2019 to 2020, surpassing US\$1.8 billion. Despite this growth, e-commerce still accounts for a small share of total retail sales in South Africa, highlighting the substantial potential for further expansion and the need for ongoing investment in digital infrastructure and innovative solutions to meet changing consumer demands (Goga *et al.*, 2019:19).

South Africa's e-commerce landscape is characterised by several unique factors (Prinsloo, 2024; Van der Merwe, 2024). Local organisations are increasingly capitalising on the digital shift, with many retailers now reaching a critical juncture where an online presence is no longer optional but essential (Van der Merwe, 2024). This sentiment is echoed by Media Update, which notes that South African retailers are at a crossroads, needing to invest heavily in e-commerce infrastructure or risk obsolescence in an ever-digitalising market (Nielsen, 2023; Prinsloo, 2024).

Innovative payment methods and improvements in delivery services have facilitated smoother transactions and enhanced the overall e-commerce experience, leading to increased consumer adoption and greater efficiency (Gao *et al.*, 2020:572). The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the shift to online shopping, reflecting the growing reliance on e-commerce for everyday needs (Akar, 2021:373).

As South Africa's e-commerce sector continues to expand, the ongoing investments in digital infrastructure and innovative solutions will be crucial in sustaining this momentum and meeting the evolving demands of consumers (Chin & Nassauer, 2018; McNulty, 2024). The rise of South Africa's e-commerce sector underscores its critical role in the modern economy, mirroring global patterns while also reflecting unique local dynamics (Van der Merwe, 2024). As the sector grows,

it presents both opportunities and challenges for traditional retailers, who must adapt to this rapidly changing landscape or risk being left behind (Shopify, 2023). The resilience and expansion of South Africa's e-commerce market, driven by technological advancements and changing consumer behaviours continue to reshape the retail landscape (Go-Globe, 2023b).

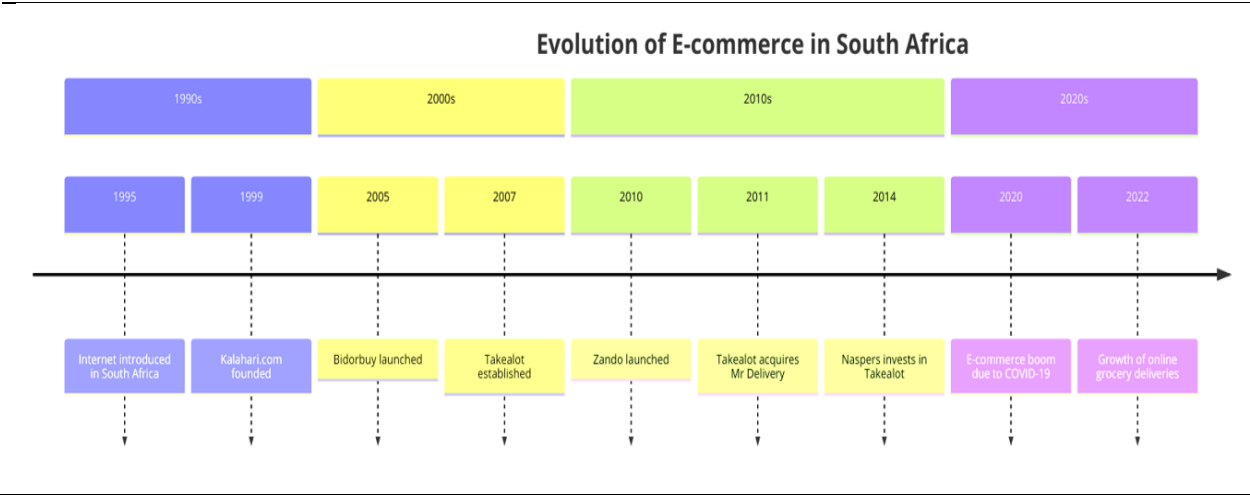


Figure 2.2: E-commerce within the South African landscape

Source: BusinessTech (2021); Goga *et al.* (2019:19); PwC (2023).

The journey of e-commerce in South Africa has undergone substantial growth, starting with the advent of the Internet in 1995. Kalahari.com, founded in 1999, set the stage for online retail, followed by the launch of Bidorbuy in 2005, which became significant in online auctions (PwC, 2023). Takealot, established in 2007, quickly grew to be one of the country's largest online retailers and by 2010, Zando diversified the market further (BusinessTech, 2021; Techopedia, 2023). Takealot's acquisition of Mr Delivery in 2011 expanded its delivery capabilities and Naspers' investment in 2014 boosted its growth (Smith, 2019; Statista, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic in the 2020s led to an explosive boom in e-commerce as more consumers turned to online shopping for safety and convenience, with a notable rise in online grocery deliveries (Shopify, 2023).

From 2020 onwards, South Africa's e-commerce sector is expected to continue its robust growth due to increased Internet penetration, mobile device usage and improved logistics (Statista, 2022). The rise of financial technology (fintech) innovations like mobile payments and digital wallets will further facilitate this growth (Research and Markets, 2021). There will be increased competition among existing players and new entrants, with a push towards enhancing customer experience through faster delivery, better customer service and personalised shopping experiences (International Trade Administration, 2024). The labour market, characterised by short-term contracts and freelance work, is anticipated to increasingly impact logistics. At the

same time, social commerce will likely expand as brands use social media to sell directly to consumers (ECDB, 2024). Developed markets will see advanced technologies like drones and autonomous vehicles for delivery, along with sophisticated big data analytics, but data privacy and cybersecurity will remain universal challenges (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). While local factors, such as infrastructure and fintech developments will influence South Africa's e-commerce growth, global trends in personalisation, sustainability and technological advancements will also shape its future (International Trade Administration, 2024).

2.2.2 Types of Online Consumers

Online consumers are individuals who engage in purchasing goods and services through the internet, encompassing a broad spectrum of demographics, behaviours and preferences (Venkatesh *et al.*, 2022:1590). Understanding these consumers is vital for organisations aiming to optimise their marketing strategies and enhance consumer engagement (Howarth, 2024). With the rapid growth of e-commerce, the digital marketplace has become more dynamic and competitive (Mupangavanhu & Kirchhoff, 2023). In South Africa online retail sales reached R30.2 billion in 2023, reflecting a significant shift towards digital shopping (Statista, 2023). This trend underscores the importance of understanding the diverse characteristics and behaviours of online consumers to effectively target and engage them (Kemp, 2023).

Casual browsers represent a significant portion of the online consumer base (Visser *et al.*, 2021a:89). These individuals primarily use the internet for general browsing, information gathering and occasional shopping (Needle, 2021). According to Go-Globe (2023), casual browsers tend to spend less time on e-commerce sites but may convert to buyers if they encounter compelling deals or recommendations. The demographic profile of online consumers is varied, encompassing all age groups, although younger generations, such as Millennials and Generation Z, are particularly active (McNulty, 2024). A report by Statista (2023e) shows that 79 percent of South Africans aged 18 to 34 have made online purchases, indicating a strong preference for digital shopping among younger consumers. Gender distribution in online shopping is relatively balanced, but purchasing habits can differ, with men often buying electronics and women frequently purchasing fashion and beauty products (McNulty, 2024; Schutte, 2023). Income level and education also play crucial roles, where higher-income individuals tend to spend more online. In contrast, those with higher education levels are generally more comfortable with technology and e-commerce (Egan, 2021). Additionally, geographic location influences online shopping behaviour, with urban residents more likely to shop online due to better internet access and delivery infrastructure (Howarth, 2024). Avid social media users form another critical segment (Deery, 2021). These consumers are highly engaged with social media platforms, spending

considerable time on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter (McInnes, 2024). Kemp (2023) reports that this group often discovers new products through social media feeds and advertisements, making them valuable for word-of-mouth marketing.

Online consumers exhibit a wide range of attitudes, interests and lifestyles that significantly shape their shopping behaviours, influenced by demographic factors, personal values and individual needs (Nielsen, 2018). Many prioritise the convenience and time-saving aspects of online shopping, enjoying the ability to make purchases from the comfort of their homes or while on the go (Hill, 2019). This flexibility is particularly appealing to those with busy lifestyles, who find traditional shopping time-consuming and restrictive (Davies, 2023). The ability to browse an extensive array of products at any time, unrestricted by store hours, further enhances the appeal of online shopping (Africanews, 2023). There's a significant trend towards sustainability and ethical considerations, as more consumers become aware of the environmental and societal impact of their purchases (Marr, 2023). This trend has driven a preference for brands that align with these values, such as those that demonstrate transparency in their supply chains, use eco-friendly materials and engage in fair trade practices (MNTN, 2024).

Organisations must stay agile and continuously adapt to these evolving trends to maintain their competitive edge in the digital marketplace (Kari, 2022). To meet these diverse needs, should implement personalised marketing strategies, utilise social media to connect with consumers and ensure a seamless, user-friendly shopping experience (Gulfraz *et al.*, 2022). Looking ahead, advancements in technology, such as AI and mobile commerce will further personalise and streamline the shopping experience, while sustainability will continue to drive consumer choices (Anderson, 2023).

Several studies have explored different aspects of online consumers in South Africa, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of the digital marketplace. Mupangavanhu and Kirchhoff (2023) examine the legislative framework protecting online consumers from deceptive advertising, emphasising the need for updated regulations to address new marketing trends. Maziriri *et al.* (2023) focus on electronic service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions, highlighting that positive customer experiences and word-of-mouth significantly impact loyalty and repurchase intentions. Heyns and Kilbourn (2022) examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people's online shopping habits, revealing a significant increase in online purchases and highlighting the crucial role of fulfilment-related service quality. Katrodia (2023) analysed consumer buying behaviour before and after the pandemic, revealing significant changes in consumption patterns due to isolation and economic factors. Chokoe and Oyekale (2022) explore the perceptions and determinants of online grocery shopping, identifying key factors, such as delivery fees, education levels and perceived convenience and risks that

influence consumer decisions. These studies collectively underscore the importance of understanding diverse types of consumers and adapting to evolving trends to maintain a competitive edge in the digital marketplace.

2.3 Online consumer decision-making

Understanding the decision-making process of online consumers is essential for optimising marketing strategies and improving e-commerce performance (Mosby, 2024). The journey begins with consumers becoming aware of a product through various channels, followed by interest and evaluation stages where they seek more information and compare options (Peterson, 2024). Remarketing and retargeting strategies play a crucial role during these stages, keeping the product top-of-mind and encouraging consumers to revisit the website (Hughes, 2022; Pru, 2024). As consumers progress to the decision stage, they add items to their cart and proceed to checkout, influenced by smooth and efficient e-commerce sales processes and a well-structured sales funnel (Simo, 2022). Finally, the conversion funnel captures the key metrics of turning leads into customers, emphasising the importance of tailored retargeting efforts to reduce cart abandonment and increase purchase rates (Abiola, 2024; Barua, 2023).

2.3.1 E-commerce within the South African landscape

The consumer journey comprises five stages: awareness, consideration, purchase, retention and advocacy. Each stage involves distinct marketing channels and strategies to shape customer behaviour and decision-making processes (Peterson, 2024). By comprehending these stages and the related marketing activities, organisations can more efficiently navigate consumers through their journey, thereby fostering loyalty and advocacy (GGI Insights, 2024).

In the digital era, the path a consumer takes from becoming aware of a product to making a purchase decision is both complex and captivating (Kartajaya *et al.*, 2019:101). In South Africa, consumers are increasingly starting their purchase journeys online, often influenced by a blend of traditional and digital advertising (Katrodia, 2023). Accordingly, over 64 percent of South Africans are active internet users, with social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram playing a pivotal role in product discovery (Goga, 2019). When a consumer recognises a need or desire for a product, they usually consult search engines, social media and review sites to collect information (GFK, 2023). Exposure to advertisements plays a crucial role at this stage. For instance, a targeted advertisement on Facebook or Instagram can significantly impact a consumer's consideration by highlighting features or special promotions that they might not have otherwise noticed (Foy, 2024). In contrast, consumers in the United States of America, for

example, often rely more heavily on influencer endorsements, with 49 percent of these consumers reporting that they rely on influencers for product recommendations (Statista, 2024).

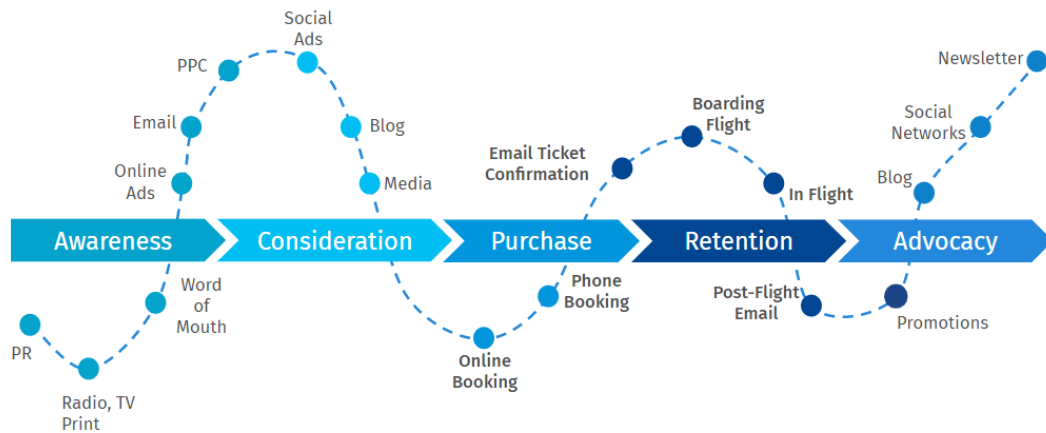


Figure 2.3: E-commerce within the South African landscape

Source: BusinessTech (2021); Goga *et al.* (2019:19); PwC (2023).

As the consumer progresses to the consideration phase, they actively compare options, seeking the best value and fit for their needs (Chaffey & Smith, 2022:67). This phase is often marked by deeper engagement with advertisements, such as watching video reviews or reading detailed blog posts (Ho, 2023). For South African consumers, considerations like local brand reputation, price sensitivity and product availability significantly influence their decision-making process (Turban *et al.*, 2018:6). A report by McKinsey highlights that 60 percent of South African consumers prioritise price and promotions when making purchase decisions (Hattingh & Ramlakan, 2022).

Online advertising that incorporates local context, offers exclusive online discounts or showcases positive testimonials from fellow South Africans can tip the scales in favour of a particular product (Go-Globe, 2023a). In other countries, consumers' priorities can vary. In Germany, environmental sustainability plays a crucial role, with 54 percent of consumers willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly products (Statista, 2023e). Ultimately, combining initial advertisement exposure and subsequent targeted marketing efforts can strongly influence a consumer's journey, leading to a well-informed purchase decision, both in South Africa and globally (Gelder, 2024; Russell, 2022).

2.3.2 E-commerce sales process

The e-commerce sales process involves a comprehensive sequence of stages meticulously designed to convert potential consumers from initial awareness to final purchase and beyond,

more commonly known as conversions (Kartajaya *et al.*, 2019:101). This process can be effectively divided into five critical stages, each preparing for the next to achieve the ultimate goal of consumer purchase and value creation for an organisation (Chaffey & Smith, 2022:67; Scott, 2022:342; Vuoksensurja, 2022:15).

The first stage referred to as the identification of the desired action, entails defining the specific conversion goals that an organisation aims to achieve (Marr, 2021:175). This stage is foundational because it sets the direction for the entire conversion process (Hotjar, 2023; Han *et al.*, 2018:49).

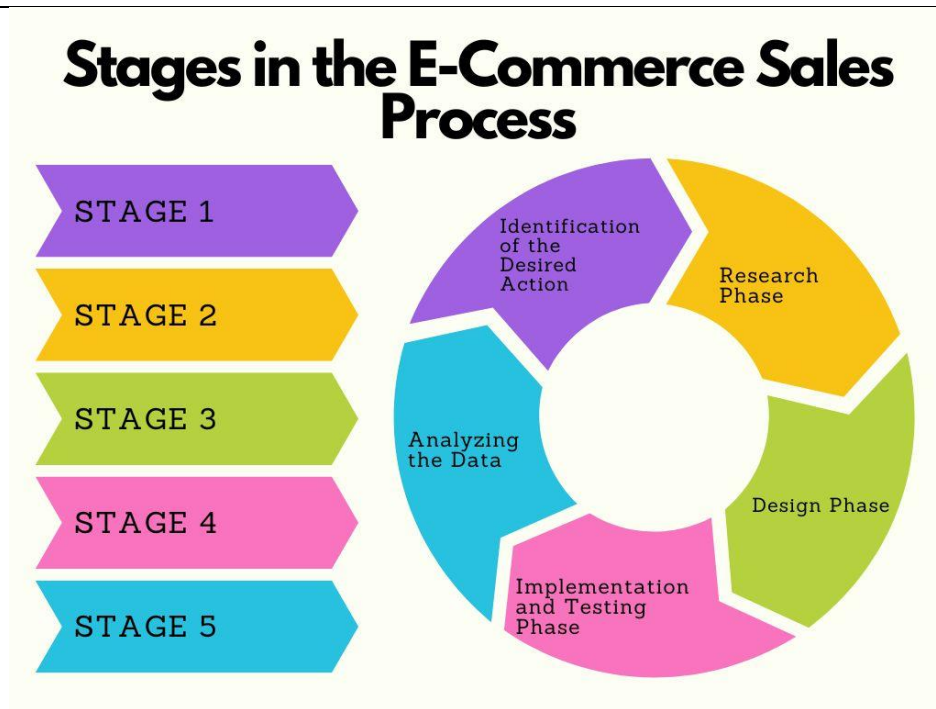


Figure 2.4: Stages in the e-commerce sales process

Source: Chaffey and Smith (2022:67); Kartajaya *et al.* (2019:101); Scott (2022:342); Vuoksensurja (2022:15).

The second stage in the e-commerce sales process is the research phase, which is crucial for understanding the market and making informed decisions. It begins with identifying customer needs, and gathering information about their pain points and buying behaviours (Smith & Johnson, 2022). Thorough market research follows, analysing trends, product demand and market conditions to identify opportunities and challenges (Brown *et al.*, 2021). Competitor analysis provides insights into effective strategies by understanding their strengths and weaknesses. Researching product features involves evaluating key customer-valued aspects and unique selling points to create standout products (Han *et al.*, 2018:49). Gathering customer feedback through surveys and focus groups offers valuable insights for improving products or services to meet expectations (Pyhäjärvi, 2020:15).

The third stage, known as the design phase, is crucial in creating interest and emotional engagement with the consumer (Hotjar, 2023). Effective design, tailored to the right audience, significantly increases the likelihood of successful conversions (Barua, 2023). This phase is closely followed by the fourth stage, more commonly known as the implementation and testing stage. This involves the testing of various conversion strategies to evaluate their effectiveness (Arikan, 2023). For instance, organisations might test different social media platforms to determine where the conversion rate is highest (AIContentfy, 2024). This fourth stage is essential for optimising the conversion process.

The final stage, namely analysing the data, involves scrutinising collected data from the conversion process to assess the effectiveness of the conversion efforts (Arikan, 2023). This analysis helps organisations understand whether their investments in the conversion process have yielded positive results and whether adjustments are necessary (Hotjar, 2023). The insights gained from this analysis inform future strategies and help refine conversion strategies (Pyhäjärvi, 2020:15).

The comprehensive e-commerce sales process starts by drawing consumers to the platform through diverse digital marketing strategies, including search engine optimisation (SEO), pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, social media marketing and email campaigns (Kaatiala, 2024:24; Pyhäjärvi, 2020:15). Engaging these consumers through compelling content, intuitive website design and personalised product recommendations is crucial for maintaining their interest and guiding them towards considering a purchase (Chaffey & Smith, 2022:67; Marr, 2021:175). During the consideration phase, consumers evaluate the products or services offered, aided by detailed descriptions, consumer reviews, images and videos (Chaffey & Smith, 2022:67). Additional incentives like comparisons, free trials and discounts help persuade consumers to make a purchase (Scott, 2022:342). Trust-building elements, such as secure payment options, easy return policies and transparent shipping information play a significant role in influencing buying decisions (Hill, 2019:28).

Once a consumer decides to make a purchase, minimising friction in the checkout process becomes paramount (Gallino *et al.*, 2023:877). This involves ensuring a seamless and quick checkout experience, offering multiple payment options and providing robust consumer support (Kartajaya *et al.*, 2019:101). Post-purchase, the focus shifts to after-sales support, encouraging consumer feedback and nurturing relationships through follow-up emails, loyalty programs and personalised recommendations (Sudibyo *et al.*, 2020:88). This comprehensive strategy not only boosts consumer satisfaction but also encourages repeat business and cultivates brand loyalty (Jothimani *et al.*, 2023:1509). The e-commerce sales funnel is closely related to the e-commerce sales process as it offers a detailed and structured approach to understanding and optimizing

each stage of a customer's journey. While the sales process outlines the steps a customer takes from initial interest to final purchase, the sales funnel breaks this down into specific stages.

2.3.3 E-commerce sales funnel

The study of funnel conversion began in the 1960s with the pioneering work of Haines *et al.* (1970). The e-commerce sales funnel is a strategic model that maps out the journey of potential customers from brand awareness to purchase decisions (Chaffey, 2023). This model is crucial for organisations as it helps understand the various stages a consumer goes through, enabling organisations to optimise their marketing efforts and improve conversion rates (Rathnayaka, 2018). The sales funnel concept highlights the gradual filtering of prospects, ensuring that marketing resources are effectively utilised to nurture leads and convert them into loyal customers (Purnomo, 2023:55).

The e-commerce sales funnel consists of several stages, each designed to guide the consumer towards making a purchase (Gozali *et al.*, 2022:9; Holownia, 2021; Persuasion Nation, 2024). At the top of the funnel (TOFU), during the awareness stage, potential consumers first encounter the brand via various marketing channels like social media, content marketing and paid advertisements (Ferenzi, 2021). Following this, the middle of the funnel (MOFU) encompasses the interest and consideration stages, where prospective customers are engaged with valuable content and their queries are addressed to build trust and interest in the products (Gozali *et al.*, 2022:9). Finally, at the bottom of the funnel (BOFU), the intent and purchase stage, the aim is to turn these engaged prospects into paying customers with targeted offers and a seamless purchasing experience (Ferenzi, 2021; Holownia, 2021). After purchase, the funnel expands to include the loyalty and advocacy stages, focusing on retaining customers and turning them into brand advocates (Shopify, 2023). The e-commerce sales funnel is depicted in Figure 2.5.

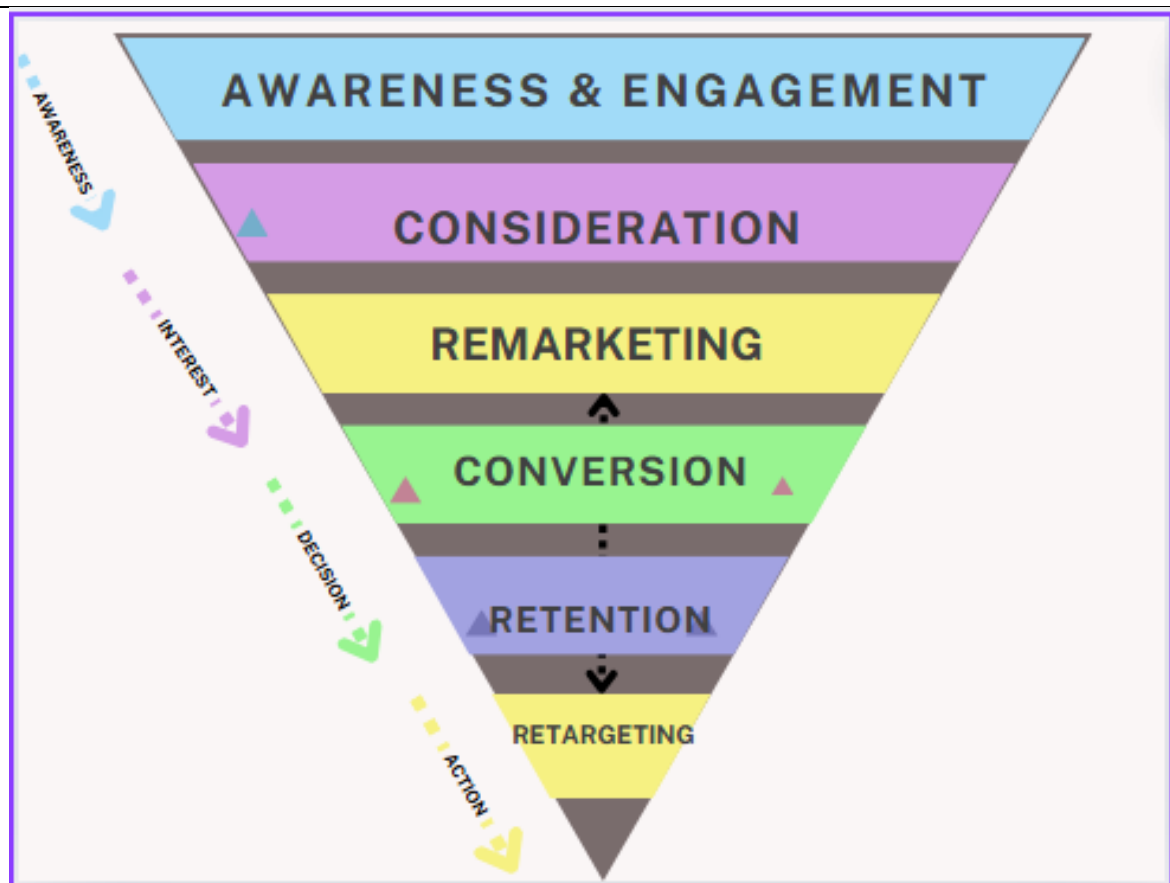


Figure 2.5: E-commerce sales funnel

Source: Chaffey, (2023); Hughes, (2022); Persuasion Nation, (2024); Pru, (2024)

The funnel begins with the stage of awareness and engagement. In traditional marketing, this stage is characterised by the use of television advertising, print media and billboards to capture the attention of potential consumers (Ferenzi, 2021). These methods are designed to create a broad reach and make as many consumers as possible aware of the brand (Hayton, 2019). In contrast, digital marketing leverages social media advertising, content marketing and search engine optimisation (SEO) to not only attract attention but also actively engage consumers (Hotjar, 2024). In this context, awareness relates to whether a consumer is aware of what a business is selling as communicated using digital and social media advertising campaigns. Awareness must be ensured and strategically designed content, should engage the viewer immediately and draw their interest to what they have to offer. Social media platforms allow brands to directly engage with potential customers, content marketing offers valuable information to attract consumers and SEO ensures the brand appears in search results when consumers seek related information (Hayton, 2019).

Moving to the consideration stage, which relates to purchase intent, traditional marketing efforts focus on distributing brochures, hosting in-store visits and organising events (Holownia, 2021). These approaches strive to offer comprehensive information about products or services, deepening consumers' interest in the brand (Fintan, 2022). Allowing consumers to touch, feel and experience the product firsthand builds trust and consideration (Sellers, 2022). On the digital side, brands use blog posts, videos and newsletters to engage with potential consumers (Ferenzi, 2021). Blog posts and videos offer in-depth insights and demonstrations, while newsletters keep consumers informed and interested over time (Holownia, 2021).

Remarketing and retargeting are crucial elements in the digital marketing funnel, specifically tailored for this domain (Hughes, 2022; Pru, 2024). These techniques aim to reconnect with users who have expressed interest but haven't yet made a purchase (DHL, 2024). Display advertisements are strategically placed to target consumers who have visited the website, reminding them of the products they viewed (Juntilla & de Braux, 2024). Email campaigns are sent to newsletter subscribers who have not made a purchase, offering special promotions or reminding them of items left in their cart (Persuasion Nation, 2024). Social media advertising targets consumers who have previously interacted with the brand's posts, prompting them to come back and finalise their purchase (McInnes, 2024).

In the conversion stage, which relates to purchases being made, traditional marketing relies on in-store promotions, discounts and compelling sales pitches to persuade consumers to make a purchase (MNTN, 2024). These strategies focus on generating a sense of urgency and offering tangible incentives to encourage consumers to make a purchase (Handley, 2023). Digital marketing, on the other hand, focuses on offering online discounts, free shipping and ensuring a seamless checkout process (Mosby, 2024). Using digital marketing to execute remarketing and retargeting strategies requires making the online purchasing experience as smooth and enticing as possible, reducing any friction that might cause a potential customer to abandon their cart (Hotjar, 2024).

In the retention stage, building long-term customer relationships is essential (Pru, 2024). Traditional marketing strategies, such as loyalty programs, follow-up calls and mail surveys, keep customers engaged and encourage repeat purchases (Ahluwalia, 2023). These efforts help sustain a connection with consumers, demonstrating that the brand values their ongoing business (Rathnayaka, 2018). In the digital realm, email follow-ups, satisfaction surveys and digital loyalty programs are employed (Shopify, 2023). Follow-up emails can provide additional product recommendations or exclusive offers, satisfaction surveys gather feedback to improve the customer experience and digital loyalty programs reward repeat customers with points or discounts (Seller, 2022).

This integrated model not only highlights the sales funnel stages but also underscores the importance of remarketing and retargeting in the digital landscape (Hayton, 2019). By combining traditional and digital strategies, brands can skilfully navigate potential customers through every phase of the buying process, from initial awareness to post-purchase retention, ensuring a comprehensive and cohesive marketing approach (MNTN, 2024; Sellers, 2022).

E-commerce sales funnels have become indispensable tools for online organisations seeking to maximise profitability and convert prospective customers into loyal customers (Pru, 2024). As highlighted by various industry experts and recent studies, implementing a well-optimised funnel can lead to significant improvements in conversion rates and overall organisational performance (Cartstack, 2024). By strategically guiding potential customers through each buying journey stage, from awareness to post-purchase, organisations can provide targeted content, address pain points and nurture leads more effectively (Kaur, 2023). This approach allows organisations to increase qualified traffic, generate interest, build trust, overcome objections and encourage repeat purchases (Chaffey, 2023).

To create an effective e-commerce sales funnel, organisations must develop a deep understanding of their target audience, develop compelling content for each funnel stage, implement marketing automation use data analytics to identify bottlenecks and continuously test and refine their strategies (Mosby, 2024). By focusing on optimising the entire consumer journey, e-commerce organisations can transform their operations and achieve sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive online marketplace (Chaffey, 2024).

The advantages of understanding and optimising the e-commerce sales funnel include improved conversion rates, higher consumer retention and better-targeted marketing efforts (Ng, 2024). A well-optimised sales funnel helps organisations identify and address drop-off points in the consumer journey, leading to significant increases in conversion rates and consumer satisfaction (Foy, 2024; Ng, 2024). Managing and analysing complex sales funnels with numerous stages and touchpoints is challenging for organisations (Kaur, 2023). The vast amount of data generated across various channels, including social media, email, websites and stores, requires a sophisticated approach to data management and analysis (Foy, 2024).

Disparate data can become fragmented, which hinders a unified view of the customer journey (Kaur, 2023; Foy, 2024). To address this concern, businesses require strong consumer relationship management (CRM) systems and marketing automation tools to unify data and offer a comprehensive perspective (Hayton, 2019). These tools enable real-time tracking of interactions, behaviour analysis and identification of drop-off points within the funnel (Sellers, 2022). Additionally, advanced analytical capabilities and skilled personnel are crucial for interpreting data and making informed decisions (Kaur, 2023). Investment in data analytics and

continuous training ensures effective funnel optimisation, ultimately improving conversion rates and overall performance (Mosby, 2024).

2.3.4 E-commerce conversion funnel

E-commerce conversions refer to the successful completion of desired actions by website visitors, typically resulting in a sale (Pyhäjärvi, 2020:15). Consequently, the integration of e-commerce conversion funnels with remarketing strategies has become increasingly important for organisations seeking to optimise their online sales performance (Kokins *et al.*, 2021:3). By integrating these strategies, organisations can enhance the customer journey, resulting in higher conversion rates and improved customer retention (Kokins *et al.*, 2021:3; Pyhäjärvi, 2020:15; Sergeev & Kirillova, 2019:2).

Landing page optimisation represents a fundamental aspect of digital marketing, essential for capturing consumers' interest and initiating the conversion process (Hughes & Gardner, 2023). As Li *et al.* (2020:101) articulated, effective calls-to-action (CTAs), engaging content and intuitive design are instrumental in significantly enhancing conversion rates. This assertion is further corroborated by Meyer (2021) and Smith (2024), who emphasise the pivotal role of these elements in driving consumer engagement and ultimately increasing conversions.

Thus, the strategic design of landing pages cannot be overstated in its impact on overall marketing effectiveness (Vogt-Thomas, 2024). Moreover, the enhancement of product pages is crucial for persuading visitors to add items to their carts (Abiola, 2024). Detailed product information, high-quality images and consumer reviews are paramount in this regard (Appert, 2024). Chen *et al.* (2019:3) underscore the necessity of comprehensive product pages for influencing purchasing decisions. Correspondingly, research conducted by Martinez-Lopez *et al.* (2020:69) indicates that such enhancements can elevate conversion rates by up to 30 percent. Therefore, the meticulous curation of product pages emerges as a pivotal strategy for boosting sales (Abiola, 2024).

Addressing cart abandonment is critical for improving sales performance (Baum, 2023). The implementation of features such as cart reminders, discount codes and personalised messages at the cart stage can play a significant role in mitigating abandonment rates (Owens, 2022). Barua (2023) posits that these strategies can reduce cart abandonment by up to 10 percent, a claim further substantiated by Smith (2021). Hence, proactive measures to reduce cart abandonment are essential for sustaining and enhancing conversion rates (Baum, 2023). The streamlining of the checkout process is indispensable for reducing cart abandonment and increasing conversions (Abiola, 2024). A simplified, user-friendly checkout process, which includes multiple payment options and robust security assurances, is crucial (Rahman, 2024). Muralidhar and Lakkanna (2024) underscore the importance of these elements, with recent data from Martinez-Lopez *et al.*

(2020:69) suggesting that optimising the checkout process can boost conversion rates by up to 35 percent. Consequently, a well-optimised checkout process is vital for maximising sales and ensuring a smooth customer experience (Rahman, 2024).

Research on the e-commerce conversion funnel and remarketing strategies as discussed in detail in Section 2.4, highlights the importance of personalised advertising, cross-platform engagement and dynamic product advertising in enhancing conversion rates (Sakalauskas & Kriksciuniene, 2024:3). Personalised advertising, aimed at consumers who have previously visited a website, can boost click-through rates by up to ten times compared to standard display advertisements (Lin *et al.*, 2023:103). Moreover, engaging consumers across multiple platforms, such as social media and search engines, can boost brand visibility and conversion rates by up to 50 percent (Martinez-Lopez *et al.*, 2020:69). Additionally, dynamic product advertisements that showcase items consumers have viewed or added to their cart can increase conversion rates by up to 20 percent (Smith, 2021).

Optimising advertisement frequency can improve campaign performance by up to 40 percent, (Muralidhar & Lakkanna, 2024). Therefore, to maximise the effectiveness of these strategies, organisations should utilise advanced analytics tools to track consumer behaviour and funnel performance, conduct regular A/B tests and implement sophisticated consumer segmentation strategies (Foy, 2020; Ng, 2024). These approaches can lead to significant improvements in conversion rates, with data-driven decision-making, A/B testing and effective segmentation each contributing to potential increases of 25 to 30 percent in several key areas of e-commerce and digital marketing (Smith, 2024).

2.3.5 E-commerce conversion process

The e-commerce conversion process is structured to transform website visitors into paying customers (Convertcart, 2024; Kellett, 2024). This process is essential for any online business focusing on optimising each step of the consumer's journey to enhance the likelihood of conversions (Barua, 2023). By understanding and refining the conversion process, organisations can significantly increase their revenue and cultivate a loyal customer base (Instant Team, 2024).

The e-commerce conversion process involves several key steps. The initial step involves grabbing potential consumers' attention through diverse marketing channels like social media, content marketing and paid advertisements (Convertcart, 2024). This stage is focused on building brand visibility and attracting visitors to the website (Barua, 2023). The goal is to ultimately create awareness about the brand and its offerings, making sure it stands out in a crowded market (Chaffey, 2024).

After consumers log in to the website, the following step is to spark their interest. Engaging content and attractive offers play a crucial role in this phase (Barua, 2023). Organisations provide valuable information to keep potential customers engaged and encourage them to explore the website further (Kellett, 2024). This can be achieved through in-depth blogs, demonstrations, free trials and social proof elements like testimonials (Convertcart, 2024).

In the desired stage, organisations aim to make their products irresistible to potential customers (Barua, 2023). This is achieved by presenting detailed descriptions, high-quality images and positive testimonials (Convertcart, 2024). The aim is to showcase the product's benefits and unique features, making it attractive to the customer (Instant Team, 2024). Additionally, strategies such as compelling exit-intent pop-ups and comparison charts can be effective in enhancing the desirability of the products (Smith, 2021).

The action stage is crucial for conversion (Shopify, 2023), urging consumers to add items to their cart and finalise their purchase (Ferenzi, 2021). Effective calls-to-action, simplified checkout processes and multiple payment options are crucial to reduce friction and facilitate the purchase (Shopify, 2023). Ensuring a smooth and user-friendly checkout experience is vital to prevent cart abandonment and secure a sale (Hotjar, 2022). Post-purchase, the focus shifts to retention, ensuring a positive experience that fosters customer loyalty (Jacqueline, 2023). This involves excellent consumer service and follow-up communication (Handley, 2023:1). Retention strategies involve sending thank-you emails, offering loyalty programs and delivering exceptional customer support (Ahluwalia, 2023). Establishing long-term relationships with customers is vital at this stage, fostering repeat business and loyalty (Ng, 2024).

In the advocacy stage, happy customers are motivated to share positive word-of-mouth and reviews, boosting the brand's reputation and drawing in new customers (Instant Team, 2024). Organisations can facilitate this by requesting reviews, offering referral incentives and engaging with customers on social media (Convertcart, 2024). The e-commerce conversion process is a multi-faceted strategy that, when optimised, can significantly enhance an organisation's profitability (Barua, 2023). By effectively managing each stage, from awareness to advocacy, organisations can boost their conversion rates and ensure long-term customer loyalty (Convertcart, 2024). Consequently, organisations that master this process are well-positioned to thrive in the competitive e-commerce landscape (Convertcart, 2024; Kellett, 2024).

The online consumer journey in South Africa encompasses several critical stages, namely awareness, consideration, decision-making and post-purchase behaviour (Msibi 2022:22; Thomas, 2020a). This journey is increasingly influenced by digital touchpoints, with social media and e-commerce platforms playing pivotal roles at each stage (Kokins *et al.*, 2021:3).

Understanding this journey is essential for organisations seeking to optimise their marketing strategies and improve consumer engagement (Barua, 2023).

The initial stage is awareness, where consumers first become aware of a product or service (Maria *et al.*, 2019:107). In South Africa, this stage is heavily influenced by social media platforms, where brands utilise targeted advertising to capture the attention of potential consumers (Mohan, 2020:418). A significant portion of South African consumers discover new products through social media advertisements and influencer endorsements (Kemp, 2023). Platforms like Facebook and Instagram are particularly effective in this regard, offering organisations advanced targeting options based on demographics, interests and online behaviours (Shopify, 2023; Venkatesh *et al.*, 2022:1590).

The consideration stage involves consumers evaluating different options and gathering information (Shavitt & Barnes: 2020:2). Schutte (2023) notes that peer reviews and user-generated content on social media platforms significantly impact consumer decisions during this phase. Websites like Takealot and Amazon South Africa are popular for product comparisons and reading consumer reviews, which help consumers make informed choices (BusinessTech, 2019). Decision-making, the third stage, is where consumers make their purchases (Turban *et al.*, 2018:6). The ease of transaction, payment security and delivery options are crucial factors influencing this decision (Rahman, 2024). According to Kotzé (2020), the integration of secure online payment methods and efficient delivery services has bolstered consumer confidence in online shopping (Ferreira & Barbosa 2017:46). Many consumers prefer platforms that offer multiple payment options, including mobile money and credit card payments, ensuring a seamless purchasing experience (Swanepoel, 2024).

Post-purchase behaviour encompasses product usage, feedback and repeat purchases (Hertel, 2023). Social media continues to play a significant role here, as consumers share their experiences and provide feedback on platforms like Twitter and Facebook (Ferreira & Barbosa 2017:44). This feedback loop is vital for organisations as it not only influences future purchase decisions but also helps in building brand loyalty and trust (Varnali, 2021:95). Schutte (2023) emphasises that satisfied customers often become brand advocates, sharing their positive experiences and thus impacting the awareness and consideration stages for new customers.

2.4 Strategic marketing strategies that influence and transform traditional decision-making behaviour

Various factors influence e-commerce conversions, each playing a vital role in determining the online organisation's success (Shvets, 2022). Consequently, understanding these factors can help organisations optimise their websites and marketing strategies to increase conversion rates.

Table 2.1 highlights the differences between remarketing and retargeting, two strategies aimed at converting potential consumers who have shown interest in a brand but have not completed a purchase (TMO Contributor, 2023). Remarketing aims to reconnect with previous consumers who interacted with the brand but didn't complete a purchase (Dollwet, 2020:16). This is typically achieved through personalised channels such as email, SMS and direct mail, where organisations send tailored offers and reminders based on past interactions, leading to higher engagement (Salt, 2022). Sending an email to remind a consumer about their abandoned shopping cart is a common remarketing strategy.

Table 2.1: Remarketing versus retargeting

Aspect	Remarketing	Retargeting
Definition	Marketing to customers who have previously engaged with the brand but have not completed a purchase.	Advertising to potential customers who have visited the website or app but have not converted.
Purpose	Re-engage past customers to complete a purchase or encourage repeat purchases.	Convert visitors who showed interest but did not complete a purchase.
Primary Channel	Email, SMS, Direct Mail	Display Advertisements, Social Media Advertisements
Strategy	Send personalised offers and reminders based on past interactions.	Show advertisements based on user behaviour and interests.
User Engagement	Higher engagement due to personalised offers.	Wide reach but lower engagement per user.
Example	Sending an email to someone who abandoned their cart.	Showing a display advertisement to someone who visited a product page but did not buy.

Source: Burns and Veeck (2020:130); Silver *et al.* (2013:58).

Retargeting involves displaying advertisements to consumers who visited the website or app but did not convert (Grabijas, 2022). These advertisements are shown on platforms like display networks and social media, targeting consumers based on their online behaviour and interests (Lu & Chen, 2020:113). Although retargeting can reach a broader audience, it generally results in lower engagement per consumer, compared to remarketing (Vestil, 2023). An example of retargeting is showing a display advertisement to a consumer who viewed a product page but did not make a purchase.

Following the explanation in Table 2.1, it is important to recognise that the success of both remarketing and retargeting efforts hinges on several key factors. A well-designed website with intuitive navigation, fast loading times and mobile responsiveness is crucial for encouraging consumers to make purchases (Shvets, 2022). Indeed, 53 percent of mobile users abandon sites

that take longer than three seconds to load (Kirkpatrick, 2016; Thinktribe, 2024). Consequently, ensuring a seamless user experience can significantly enhance conversion rates (Thinktribe, 2024).

Product information and reviews play a vital role in bridging the gap between online and in-person shopping experiences, fostering trust and facilitating informed decision-making, thereby significantly boosting conversion rates (Salt, 2022; Shvets, 2022). Detailed product descriptions, high-quality images and consumer reviews build trust and provide the information consumers need to make informed decisions (Shvets, 2022). Notably, displaying product reviews can increase conversion rates by 270 percent (GRIT, 2024). Thus, these elements help build trust and facilitate informed purchasing decisions (Salt, 2022).

Pricing and promotions are critical in terms of attracting customers, driving sales and maintaining customer loyalty, ultimately leading to increased conversion rates and overall organisational success (Heintzeler *et al.*, 2021). Competitive pricing and promotional offers, such as discounts, free shipping and limited-time deals, can incentivise purchases (Shopify, 2023). Approximately 71 percent of consumers consider promotions when deciding where to shop online (Hayes, 2024). Thus, providing a diverse selection of high-quality products at competitive prices draws in more consumers and promotes repeat purchases (Shopify, 2023).

Trust and security are essential components in e-commerce because they directly affect consumers' willingness to complete transactions (Pires, 2023). Consumers need to feel confident that their personal and payment information is secure (Lisbino, 2024; Torkington, 2021). Displaying trust badges, offering multiple secure payment options and having clear privacy policies can enhance trust and reduce cart abandonment rates (Lisbino, 2024; Thinktribe, 2024). Additionally, providing excellent customer service, transparent return policies and timely delivery updates further enhance trust and reliability (Wagner Mainardes *et al.*, 2019:447).

Personalisation greatly enhances e-commerce conversions by customising the shopping experience for each consumer, boosting engagement and ultimately driving higher conversion rates (Farman *et al.*, 2020:299). Personalised emails are proposed to deliver six times higher transaction rates (Loberg, 2022). Consequently, leveraging data analytics to understand consumer behaviour and preferences enables organisations to deliver personalised experiences to their consumers regarding the online shopping journey and the subsequent product offerings (Jain, 2023).

Consumer support is crucial to e-commerce organisations who wish to enhance customer satisfaction, build trust and increase conversions (Pires, 2023). Accessible and responsive customer support through live chat, phone or email can help address any concerns or questions,

facilitating smoother transactions (Shopify, 2023). It is projected that 93 percent of consumers are likely to make repeat purchases with organisations that offer excellent customer service (Fontanella, 2024). Social proof and influencer endorsements enhance credibility and influence purchasing decisions (Fontanella, 2024; Hayes, 2024). Leveraging social proof through user-generated content and influencer endorsements can significantly impact consumer trust (Fontanella, 2024). Approximately 92 percent of consumers trust influencer recommendations more than traditional advertisements (Raphael, 2023). Consequently, the effective use of social media platforms, influencer partnerships and targeted advertisement campaigns can drive traffic to websites and increase conversions (Hayes, 2024; Lindecrantz *et al.*, 2020).

In conclusion, focusing on these factors can significantly improve conversion rates, consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Jain, 2023; Lindecrantz *et al.*, 2020; Shopify, 2023). Keeping up with changing consumer preferences, technological advancements and market trends requires ongoing effort and investment (Thomas, 2020a). Additionally, competition in the e-commerce space can be intense, making it challenging to stand out (Hayes, 2024). According to Hughes (2022), organisations that invest in improving website design, user experience, product quality and consumer trust see significant increases in their conversion rates. Although continuous monitoring and optimisation require ongoing effort and investment, organisations that address these key factors can create a more effective and profitable online presence, standing out in the competitive e-commerce landscape (Hughes, 2022; Shvets, 2022; Thinktribe, 2024).

2.4.1 Remarketing strategies

Remarketing strategies are crucial in digital marketing, aiming to reconnect with potential consumers who have engaged with a brand but have not finalised a purchase (Few, 2022). Consequently, these strategies are crucial for nurturing leads, enhancing brand recall and ultimately increasing conversion rates (Aakash & Aggarwal, 2019; Grabijas, 2022). By maintaining a connection with their audience through subtle reminders and personalised messages, organisations can foster higher engagement and drive sales more effectively (Sukhenko, 2022). Moreover, this approach is more cost-efficient compared to efforts aimed at attracting entirely new customers (Micka, 2024).

Remarketing manifests in several forms, each tailored to specific stages of the consumer journey (Cuofano, 2024; Russell, 2022; Ho, 2023; Shopify, 2023). Standard remarketing involves displaying advertisements to past consumers as they navigate other websites (Jung, 2017:306). This broad approach keeps the brand top-of-mind (Shopify, 2023). Dynamic remarketing enhances standard remarketing by showing advertisements featuring products or services that consumers have previously viewed on an organisation's website, thereby increasing the

relevance and appeal of the advertisements (Russell, 2022). Email remarketing targets consumers who have abandoned their shopping carts or who have left the website without completing a desired action (Hughes, 2022). This strategy sends targeted emails to remind and encourage consumers to finalise their purchases (Ho, 2023). Sequential remarketing involves showing consumers a series of advertisements in a specific order, guiding them through the sales funnel (Cuofano, 2024). This method is used to tell a story or provide incremental information, increasing engagement and conversion over time (Micka, 2024). Video remarketing targets consumers who have interacted with a brand's videos or YouTube channel (Ho, 2023). It displays personalised video advertisements to these users on YouTube or other Google Display Network sites, enhancing engagement and recall (Cuofano, 2024). Social media remarketing leverages platforms like Facebook and Instagram to reach past consumers with tailored advertisements based on their previous interactions with the brand, utilising the extensive targeting capabilities of social media networks (Hughes, 2022; Shopify, 2023). This strategy utilises the extensive targeting capabilities of social media networks to increase conversions and sales by reminding interested consumers about products they viewed or added to their cart, encouraging them to complete their purchase or explore new offerings (Influencity, 2024; Arora, 2024)

Criteo (2023) proposes that dynamic remarketing advertisements can boost conversion rates by up to 70 percent. Similarly, AdRoll's (2020) study reveals a 26 percent increase in return consumers due to remarketing efforts. Furthermore, email remarketing campaigns boast impressive engagement metrics, with open rates as high as 45 percent and click-through rates of 21 percent, far exceeding those of standard email campaigns (Criteo, 2023; Russell, 2022).

These statistics underscore the pivotal role of remarketing in crafting marketing campaigns that not only attract potential consumers, but also retain and convert potential customers into paying customers (Arora, 2024; Criteo, 2023). Consequently, this leads to more efficient and successful marketing outcomes, ultimately driving higher conversion rates and enhancing overall organisational performance (AdRoll, 2020; Criteo, 2023; Shopify, 2023).

2.4.1.1 Benefits of remarketing strategies

Remarketing offers significant benefits that can greatly enhance an organisation's digital marketing efforts (Cuofano, 2024). One of the primary advantages is the potential for improved conversion rates (Foy, 2024). Because remarketing targets users who have previously shown interest in a brand, they have a higher likelihood of converting into customers than cold leads (Lindecrantz *et al.*, 2020; Shopify, 2023). For example, by aiming personalised advertisements at consumers who have added items to their cart but abandoned the purchase, organisations can

effectively encourage these potential buyers to finalise their transactions, thus increasing conversion rates (Thomas, 2020a).

In addition to higher conversion rates, remarketing also enhances brand recall (Mosby, 2024). By consistently presenting the brand to the target audience through tailored advertisements, organisations ensure that it remains prominent in the minds of potential consumers, increasing the likelihood that these consumers will think of the brand when they are ready to make a purchase (Jain, 2023). A consumer browsing travel websites for vacation destinations but not booking may be reminded of the organisation's offerings through continuous exposure to their advertisements, which, in turn, could lead them to revisit the website (Russell, 2022).

Remarketing is particularly cost-effective (Go-Globe, 2023b). By focusing on consumers who have already interacted with the brand, organisations often achieve a higher return on investment (ROI) compared to broader advertising strategies (Go-Globe, 2023b; Shavitt & Barnes, 2020). A software organisation targeting consumers who downloaded a free trial but didn't upgrade to the paid version of a program or app can use remarketing to highlight the benefits of the paid version, thereby facilitating more cost-effective customer acquisition (Varnali, 2021).

Remarketing provides actionable insights that are invaluable for refining future marketing efforts (Gartner, 2019). By analysing consumer behaviour from remarketing campaigns, organisations can gain valuable data to optimise their strategies (AdRoll, 2020). For instance, understanding which products consumers are clicking on or adding to their cart can inform adjustments to inventory, pricing and marketing strategies, ultimately enabling organisations to better meet consumer demand (Ahluwalia, 2023). Finally, the ability to create tailored advertisement campaigns based on consumer interactions ensures continuous improvement in performance (Ho, 2023). A real estate agency targeting consumers who viewed property listings but didn't make inquiries can use remarketing advertisements to showcase similar properties or offer virtual tours, thus providing a more personalised experience while simultaneously increasing engagement (Chen *et al.*, 2019; Cuofano, 2024; Ho, 2023; Russell, 2022; Shopify, 2023).

2.4.1.2 Challenges associated with remarketing strategies

Remarketing, although an effective marketing strategy, presents several challenges that necessitate careful management (Gartner, 2019). One significant issue is advertisement fatigue, where constant exposure to the same advertisements can irritate the target audience (KV *et al.*, 2021). To mitigate this, marketers must diversify creative advertising and limit the frequency of advertisement displays to avoid overexposure (Desmal *et al.*, 2019).

Privacy concerns are increasingly prevalent as consumers become more aware and wary of being tracked and targeted with advertisements (Gough *et al.*, 2019). Adhering to data protection regulations is essential worldwide, as laws like GDPR in Europe, CCPA in the US and POPIA in South Africa establish stringent standards (Husain, 2024). Non-compliance can lead to hefty fines and harm to brand reputation (Bhagattjee, 2024; Deloitte, 2021; Euromonitor International, 2021).

POPIA, similar to GDPR and CCPA, mandates strict measures to protect personal information and uphold consumer privacy rights. Non-compliance with POPIA can lead to severe penalties, including fines of up to R10 million and severe reputational damage, highlighting the global importance of robust data protection practices (Bhagattjee, 2024). Deloitte (2021) found that 51 percent of organisations faced challenges in obtaining clear consent, impacting their ability to run remarketing campaigns effectively. Moreover, 45 percent of consumers feel annoyed by repetitive advertisements, leading to disengagement and decreased advertisement effectiveness (Hesterberg, 2021).

The proliferation of devices and platforms has introduced significant technical challenges for marketers, particularly in maintaining consistent and effective remarketing strategies across various devices such as desktops, tablets and mobile phones (Smith & Jones, 2020). As consumers increasingly engage with multiple devices, marketers must adapt by implementing sophisticated cross-device marketing strategies that ensure seamless targeting and message delivery across all platforms (Lilly, 2024).

Achieving this requires advanced cross-device tracking technologies that collect and analyse user data from multiple devices, creating a comprehensive view of consumers' behaviour (Nielsen, 2023). These technologies can be deterministic, relying on specific identifiers like login information or probabilistic, using data points such as IP addresses and device types to infer connections between devices (Rowell, 2023). This unified tracking is crucial for delivering personalised and synchronised marketing messages, thereby enhancing user engagement and conversion rates (Romero, 2024). However, the fragmentation of data across multiple channels adds another layer of complexity, as it complicates the creation of cohesive remarketing strategies (KV *et al.*, 2021).

Approximately 40 percent of marketers face challenges due to this data fragmentation, leading to disjointed marketing efforts (Gartner, 2019). To tackle this, it is crucial to merge data from various sources, like website analytics, social media and email marketing, to gain a cohesive understanding of the customer journey (Smith & Jones, 2020). Tools and platforms that support cross-device data integration can help marketers overcome these challenges, providing valuable insights into consumer behaviour across devices and channels, thereby enabling more effective and cohesive remarketing strategies (Lilly, 2021; Romero, 2024).

The complexity of tailoring remarketing messages to diverse audience segments underscores the increasing necessity for effective personalisation strategies (Lindecrantz *et al.*, 2020). Personalised content is significantly more engaging, yet many organisations struggle with audience segmentation due to inadequate tools (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Segmenting the audience by grouping the target market according to shared traits like demographics, psychographics, behaviour and geography is crucial for developing personalised and relevant advertisement messages (eMarketer, 2022). Customised messages tend to resonate more with each segment, resulting in higher engagement and conversion rates (Jafari, 2023).

The increasing expense of digital advertising creates extra hurdles, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which struggle to compete with larger organisations that have more significant marketing budgets (Howarth, 2023). This financial pressure makes it imperative for SMEs to optimise their marketing strategies to ensure cost-effectiveness and maximise return on investment (eMarketer, 2022). Moreover, the increasing use of advertisement blockers further complicates remarketing efforts by preventing advertisements from reaching a significant portion of the target audience (Mummalaneni *et al.*, 2020).

To overcome these challenges, organisations can explore alternative strategies such as email remarketing and social media engagement (Kumar *et al.*, 2023). These methods can help maintain customer engagement without relying solely on traditional digital advertising channels (QRY Insights, 2023). Additionally, continuously optimising campaigns for performance and ROI is essential (Kaur, 2021). This involves regularly refreshing advertisement content and ensuring high-quality advertisement placements to maintain user interest and engagement (Mummalaneni *et al.*, 2020).

Moreover, incorporating advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning can improve audience segmentation and personalisation efforts (Jafari, 2023). These technologies allow for more dynamic and precise segmentation, enabling marketers to tailor their strategies to specific audience needs and preferences (QRY Insights, 2023). The use of AI-driven segmentation and predictive analytics can provide deeper insights into consumer behaviour, facilitating more effective marketing campaigns (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

2.4.2 Retargeting strategies

Retargeting strategies are primarily aimed at reconnecting with consumers who have previously interacted with a brand's website or digital content but have not completed an intended action, like making a purchase (Uttley, 2021). The core of retargeting's effectiveness lies in its ability to remind and persuade potential customers to return and finalise their transactions (Madelin, 2022).

According to AdRoll (2020), retargeting can increase conversion rates by as much as 150 percent compared to standard display advertising, underscoring its importance in a marketer's toolkit.

There are various types of remarketing, each tailored to different stages of the customer journey (Neil Patel, 2024). Standard remarketing involves showing advertising to past consumers as they browse other sites on the Google Display Network, keeping the brand top-of-mind (Mediatool, 2024). Dynamic remarketing takes a step further by displaying advertising featuring products or services that consumers viewed on the advertiser's site, thus providing a more personalised experience (Madelin, 2022). Email remarketing targets consumers who have interacted with email campaigns, encouraging them to revisit the site (Hughes, 2022). Social media retargeting leverages platforms like Facebook and Instagram to reach consumers based on their interactions with the brand's social media content (Shopify, 2023). Each type of remarketing plays a crucial role in maintaining brand visibility and nurturing leads through the sales funnel (Mosby, 2024).

The benefits of retargeting are well-documented, with numerous statistics highlighting its impact. Criteo (2023) reports that consumers who visit a particular website and are then retargeted with display advertising are 70 percent more likely to convert. Additionally, personalised retargeting messages significantly boost engagement (Shvets, 2022), as shown by Lindecrantz *et al.* (2020) who found that personalised content is 40 percent more likely to be engaged with. Boosting engagement is vital not just for driving immediate sales, but also for forging lasting connections between the brand and the consumer. This process fosters brand loyalty and encourages repeat visits (Shah, 2024). These statistics highlight that when retargeting is executed with a keen focus on personalisation, it transforms from a mere advertising strategy to a strategic tool that significantly boosts conversion rates and deepens consumer engagement (Juntilla & de Braux, 2024). This approach aligns well with the evolving expectations of consumers who increasingly value experiences and communications that are relevant and specifically tailored to their preferences (Howarth, 2024).

Implementing a successful retargeting strategy requires a nuanced approach, focusing on key components that align with both technological capabilities and consumer preferences (Shah, 2024). Initially, installing tracking pixels on websites is essential to gather data about consumer behaviour. This data allows marketers to create precise audience segments based on specific actions consumers have taken, such as viewing a product or abandoning a shopping cart (Criteo, 2023; Sellers, 2022; Shvets, 2022). Once these segments are established, the development of tailored advertisements targeting these specific groups becomes crucial (Shvets, 2022). These advertisements should be visually appealing and include compelling calls-to-action to maximise consumer engagement (Gartner, 2019). Another critical aspect is setting frequency caps to

prevent advertisement fatigue, which can occur when consumers are repeatedly exposed to the same advertisement, leading to annoyance and disengagement (Salt, 2022).

For retargeting campaigns to remain effective, marketers must engage in continuous monitoring and optimisation (Russell, 2022). This involves integrating cross-device tracking to ensure a seamless advertising experience across all consumer devices, prioritising privacy compliance to maintain trust and diversifying the advertisements used in campaigns to keep the content fresh and engaging (Sellers, 2022). This multifaceted approach ensures that retargeting not only captures attention but also respects consumer preferences and legal standards, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of digital marketing strategies (Arikan, 2023)

2.4.2.1 Benefits associated with retargeting strategies

This strategy offers several benefits, making it a valuable tool for marketers aiming to optimise their online presence and conversion rates (DTD, 2021; Gibbons, 2024). Retargeting significantly increases brand recall (Idowu, 2024). When consumers are exposed to repeat advertising, the brand remains top-of-mind, which is essential in a competitive marketplace (Chetana, 2024). In fact, studies have shown that retargeted advertising can lead to over a 1000 percent increase in branded search, indicating a heightened awareness and consideration of the brand (Carmicheal, 2024).

Retargeting improves conversion rates (Barua, 2023). Consumers who have previously shown interest in a product or service are more likely to convert when they encounter relevant advertisements that remind them of their initial interest (Barua, 2023; Shopify, 2023). Consequently, retargeted customers are 70 percent more likely to complete a purchase compared to first-time customers (Widmer, 2023). This targeted approach efficiently moves consumers down the sales funnel, resulting in higher conversion rates (Barua, 2023).

Retargeting enhances the personalisation of the customer journey (Neilpatel, 2024). By using data from previous interactions, marketers can tailor advertisements to match the specific interests and behaviours of consumers (Kaur, 2023). This personalised approach makes the advertising more relevant and engaging, increasing the likelihood of conversions (Neilpatel, 2024; Kaur, 2023). Personalised retargeting has been found to increase click-through rates (CTR) by up to 10 times compared to non-personalised advertising (AdRoll, 2020).

Retargeting can lead to improved ROI on advertising spend (Visser *et al.*, 2021b). Since retargeting focuses on users who have already expressed interest, advertising is more likely to yield positive results (Fintan, 2022). Consequently, organisations can see a reduction in cost per impression (CPI) and a higher ROI (Patrizi, 2023). Data from FasterCapital (2023) indicates that

the average ROI for retargeting is ten times higher than that of regular display advertising, demonstrating the efficiency of this strategy.

Retargeting also helps in reducing cart abandonment, which for e-commerce organisations, poses a significant challenge (Abiola, 2024). Retargeted advertising can remind consumers of the items left in their carts, encouraging them to complete the purchase (Shvets, 2022). Research shows that retargeted advertising can recover up to 26 percent of abandoned carts (Barua, 2023; Owens, 2022). Lastly, retargeting provides valuable insights into customer behaviour, allowing marketers to refine their strategies accordingly (Hughes, 2022)

2.4.2.2 Challenges associated with retargeting strategies

Implementing effective retargeting campaigns poses numerous challenges that necessitate strategic consideration and adaptation (Markus, 2023). One major challenge is the accurate tracking of consumer behaviour across various platforms and devices, which is particularly complex in the South African context (Schutte 2023). A study by the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) found that 68 percent of marketers struggle with cross-device tracking, complicating the creation of a unified consumer profile for effective retargeting (IAB, 2020). This difficulty is exacerbated by the fragmented digital landscape and diverse consumer behaviours prevalent in the country (DHL, 2024). Furthermore, the growing use of privacy-focused technologies and regulations, such as the POPIA in South Africa, complicates the collection and utilisation of consumer data for retargeting purposes (Smith & Jones, 2020; IAB, 2020). This regulatory environment demands that organisations comply with stringent data protection laws, which can limit the scope and effectiveness of retargeting efforts (Desmal *et al.*, 2019).

Data quality and integration also present substantial hurdles (Go-Globe *et al.*, 2023). Inconsistent or incomplete data can lead to ineffective retargeting, where advertising is either irrelevant or poorly timed (Howarth, 2023). For instance, a survey conducted by Salesforce revealed that 57 percent of marketers cite data fragmentation as a major impediment to effective retargeting (Salesforce, 2023). This issue is compounded by the integration challenges posed by disparate data sources, necessitating robust data management systems and processes (Smith & Jones, 2020). Additionally, the rapid evolution of digital platforms and changes in consumer behaviour demands continuous adaptation and refinement of retargeting strategies (Desmal *et al.*, 2019). To maintain efficacy, organisations must invest in sophisticated data management solutions that can handle fragmented and varied data inputs, ensuring that retargeting campaigns remain relevant and timely (Go-Globe *et al.*, 2023b; Gough *et al.*, 2019).

Another significant challenge is the potential for advertisement fatigue among consumers (KV *et al.*, 2021). When consumers are repeatedly shown the same advertising, it can lead to negative

perceptions of the brand and decreased campaign effectiveness (Salt, 2022). A study by Nielsen found that 42 percent of consumers express annoyance at seeing the same advertisements repeatedly (Nielsen, 2023). This requires marketers to carefully balance the frequency and variety of retargeting advertisements to maintain consumer engagement without causing annoyance (Hoyjar, 2023). The competitive landscape of digital advertising means that achieving visibility in retargeting campaigns can be difficult (Go-Globe, 2023a). High competition for advertisement space drives up costs, making it essential for organisations to optimise their advertising spend and targeting precision to achieve a favourable ROI (Patrizi, 2023). As such, digital advertising spending in South Africa is projected to grow by 12 percent annually, increasing competition for advertisement placements (Cramer-Flood, 2023; Statista, 2024). Additionally, technical challenges, such as advertisement blockers and cookie restrictions, further limit the reach and effectiveness of retargeting campaigns, necessitating innovative approaches that do not solely rely on traditional tracking methods (Nielsen, 2023; Sellers, 2022).

While retargeting holds significant potential for enhancing marketing effectiveness, it is accompanied by multifaceted challenges that require a strategic and adaptive approach (Arikan, 2023). Addressing these challenges involves a combination of robust data management, creative advertising strategies and advanced analytical capabilities to navigate the evolving digital advertising landscape effectively (Go-Globe, 2023b). By overcoming these obstacles, marketers can harness the full potential of retargeting to drive engagement and conversion in an increasingly competitive market (Sellers, 2022).

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has comprehensively explored the multifaceted nature of digital transformation and e-commerce, particularly within the South African context. We have examined the diverse types of online consumers and their decision-making processes, tracing their purchase journeys through e-commerce sales and conversion funnels. By understanding these components, organisations can optimise their strategies to enhance conversions and adapt to the evolving digital landscape. Strategic marketing strategies that influence and transform traditional decision-making behaviours were highlighted, showcasing their critical role in helping organisations thrive in the digital age. Additionally, the chapter delved into the benefits and challenges of remarketing and retargeting strategies, emphasising their importance in enhancing customer engagement and driving sales.

As e-commerce continues to reshape the business landscape, offering unprecedented opportunities for expansion and convenience, organisations must remain agile and responsive to consumer needs and concerns. Despite the widespread adoption of online shopping, challenges

such as consumer hesitancy towards fully embracing this medium persist. Understanding consumer behaviour in e-commerce is crucial for organisations aiming to succeed in the digital era. Looking ahead, the next chapter will focus on factors influencing consumers' online purchase intentions, with an emphasis on remarketing and retargeting strategies. These techniques are vital for boosting consumer engagement and sales and their effective implementation can significantly impact an organisation's success in the competitive online marketplace. By examining these factors, this study sought to offer valuable insights into optimising digital marketing strategies to maintain and influence consumer purchase intentions.

CHAPTER 3 ONLINE CONSUMERS AND THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

3.1 Introduction

In the contemporary digital marketplace, consumer behaviour is undergoing rapid transformation due to the proliferation of online shopping and the advent of increasingly sophisticated marketing strategies (Kibuacha, 2021; Torkington, 2021). The shift from traditional to digital retail environments has necessitated the development of new approaches to engage and convert potential customers (Business Tech, 2022; Makhitha & Ngobeni, 2021). Among the most significant of these approaches are retargeting and remarketing strategies, which have become essential tools for organisations aiming to capitalise on the growing volume of online consumer traffic (Business Tech, 2022). These strategies involve tracking consumer behaviour, such as browsing history and past interactions with a brand, to deliver individualised advertisements that remind consumers of products or services they have shown interest in but have not yet purchased (Lu & Chen, 2020:113; Lee & Kwon, 2021).

The success of retargeting and remarketing strategies hinges not just on the technology used, but also on understanding the factors that shape consumer attitudes towards online shopping. Consumer behaviour online is intricate, influenced by external factors, internal motivations and attitudes towards marketing strategies (Brookshire, 2024; Padilla, 2023). To dissect these complexities, this chapter delves into various behavioural and attitudes models. By examining models like the Tricomponent model, the ABC model and multi-attribute attitudes models, we gain insights into the cognitive, affective and behavioural elements of consumer attitudes and how they respond to marketing stimuli.

This chapter delves into the factors that shape consumer attitudes towards retargeting and remarketing strategies, namely conversion conditions, awareness of these marketing strategies, perceived value, perceived risk and various organisational-related factors, such as website design, online reviews, e-reputation and e-trust. By weaving these elements into a conceptual framework, this chapter seeks to offer a thorough understanding of how these factors collectively shape consumers' online purchase intentions. This framework is particularly relevant in the context of the South African digital marketplace, where internet penetration is rapidly increasing and organisations are fiercely competing for consumer attention.

3.2 Factors influencing consumer behaviour

To grasp the complexities of consumer behaviour and decision-making, it is essential to explore the key factors that drive these processes alongside the behavioural models that elucidate how these factors interact and shape consumer choices.

3.2.1 External factors

External factors are those influences that originate outside the individual but significantly affect their behaviour and decision-making processes (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2018:341). According to Visconti, Peñaloza and Toulouse (2020), these factors include cultural, social and individual influences that shape consumers' values, attitudes and behaviours. In the diverse and dynamic market of South Africa, external factors play a critical role in determining consumer preferences and choices (Dzomonda & Fatoki, 2019). These external influences impact behaviour by shaping how individuals perceive and interact with brands, affect decision-making by providing context and reference points for choices and influence purchase intention by setting cultural and social norms around buying (Kotler & Keller, 2016:185).

Understanding these factors in online purchases enables organisations to craft personalised marketing strategies that resonate with various consumer segments, meeting the specific needs and expectations of the South African market (Fourie *et al.*, 2022:1083). Building on this understanding, it is crucial to examine cultural factors, which significantly shape consumer behaviour in online purchases, particularly within the diverse and multifaceted South African market.

3.2.1.1 Cultural factors

Culture significantly influences consumer behaviour by incorporating the shared values, beliefs and customs of society (Hofstede, 2011:8). Understanding cultural nuances is essential for marketers aiming to influence consumer behaviour effectively. Culture shapes values, attitudes and behaviours, influencing how individuals perceive products and make purchasing decisions (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2018:341). Furthermore, cultural factors impact online purchase behaviour by influencing preferences for certain products and brands, affect decision-making by establishing norms and values that guide choices and shape purchase intentions by creating expectations around consumption (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2020).

In a globalised world, recognising and adapting to cultural differences can lead to more successful marketing strategies (McKinsey & Company, 2021). This is particularly relevant in diverse regions like South Africa, where cultural variations are pronounced (Thomas, 2020b). Moreover,

understanding cultural factors is paramount due to the country's diverse cultural landscape (Dzomonda & Fatoki, 2019:83). This diversity necessitates a nuanced approach to marketing, where a one-size-fits-all strategy is ineffective (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Moreover, grasping these cultural subtleties allows organisations to customise their products and communication strategies to connect with different consumer groups within South Africa (Klein, 2022).

While some cultural groups might prioritise community and family in their purchasing decisions, others might focus more on individualism and individual achievement (Breakthrough3x, 2023). Acknowledging and respecting these variations enables marketers to customise their messages and products to cater to the specific needs and preferences of diverse cultural segments (Nkosi, 2024:48). Subcultures, which include ethnic groups, religious communities and regional cultures, further diversify consumer behaviour (Dimitris Kitis *et al.*, 2018:151). Marketing strategies that work in urban areas with a mix of global and local cultures might differ from those in rural areas where traditional practices are more prevalent (Pillay & Struweg, 2023). Understanding subcultures enables marketers to create more targeted and relevant marketing strategies (Pleasant, 2022).

Social class, determined by factors like income, education and occupation, plays a significant role in influencing consumer behaviour and purchasing power (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2018). In South Africa, the historical context of apartheid has left enduring economic disparities, making social class a critical factor in marketing strategies (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2020). Different social classes have varying levels of disposable income, access to education and lifestyle aspirations, which shape their purchasing behaviours (Meyer, 2021). For higher social classes, marketing strategies can focus on luxury, exclusivity and premium quality, appealing to their ability and willingness to pay for superior products and services (Nielsen, 2018). In contrast, marketing strategies for lower-income groups should emphasise affordability, value and practicality (Meyer, 2021). Undoubtedly, culture and social class are highly linked to social factors since referent social groups like family and friends typically form part of the same cultural system and are tied to social standing. As such, social factors are important to consider when investigating consumer behaviour (Smith, 2015).

3.2.1.2 Social factors

Social factors involve the impact of social relationships on consumer behaviour (Bandura, 1977). According to the social learning theory, individuals learn and adopt behaviours by observing the actions and outcomes of others (Bandura, 1986). Referent groups and family, in particular, play significant roles in influencing consumer behaviour, especially in the South African context (Goldberg & Groenewald, 2022:65). Referent groups, which include friends, peers and co-

workers, serve as key influencers in the decision-making process of consumers (Solomon *et al.*, 2018). These groups provide social cues and norms that shape individuals' perceptions and preferences. For instance, a recommendation from a close friend or a positive review from a co-worker can significantly boost a consumer's confidence in a product or service (Meyer, 2021).

In South Africa, where community ties and social networks are strong, the influence of referent groups is pronounced (Smith, 2024). Social media platforms enhance this effect by enabling consumers to share their experiences and opinions with a broader audience, thereby expanding the influence of referent groups (Shopify, 2023). In the South African context, family is a central pillar in the social fabric, significantly impacting consumer behaviour (McKinsey & Company, 2021). The family structure, including the roles of various family members, affects decision-making processes (Shareef *et al.*, 2016:1). In many South African communities, extended family networks play a significant role in purchasing decisions, reflecting a collectivist culture where family consensus is valued (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014:158).

Social roles and status, along with the influence of opinion leaders and influencers, contribute to shaping consumer behaviour (Smith, 2020). These social factors impact online purchase behaviour by affecting the types of products considered and valued, influence decision-making by introducing social proof and peer recommendations and shape purchase intentions through the desire to conform or stand out within social circles (Meyer, 2020). Therefore, understanding family dynamics and the influence of family members, particularly in a collectivist society, is essential for marketers aiming to cater to this demographic (Van Heerden, 2019). The interplay of these social factors highlights the importance of targeting marketing efforts to align with the social dynamics of the target audience (Shopify, 2023). For instance, leveraging social media platforms where referent groups interact can be an effective strategy (Goldberg & Groenewald, 2022:65). Additionally, creating marketing messages that resonate with family values and emphasise the benefits of products for the entire family can enhance engagement and drive sales (Pleasant, 2022). Beyond cultural factors, individual aspects like age, lifestyle and personal preferences also significantly shape consumer behaviour and decision-making in online purchases (Mustakim *et al.*, 2020:551).

3.2.1.3 Individual factors

Individual factors are inherent to a person and encompass age, life-cycle stage, occupation, economic conditions, lifestyle and uniqueness (Kotler & Keller, 2016:182). The ageing population might focus on health and retirement products, while younger consumers are drawn to technology and fashion (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Similarly, in South Africa, age and life-cycle stage influence needs and preferences; for instance, younger consumers may prioritise fashion and

technology, while older consumers might focus on health and comfort (Rightford, 2021:146). Younger consumers, like teens and young adults, are typically more tech-savvy and more inclined to shop online for fashion, electronics and entertainment (Rehman *et al.*, 2020:218). Their decision-making is often influenced by social media trends and peer recommendations. For example, they might be drawn to the latest gadgets or trendy clothing brands they see advertised online (McKinsey & Company, 2021). In contrast, older consumers may prefer online shopping for convenience, focusing on products that offer comfort and health benefits, such as dietary supplements or ergonomic furniture (Rightford, 2021:150). The ease of comparing prices and reading reviews online also significantly impacts their decision-making and purchase intentions (Lăzăroiu *et al.*, 2020:890).

Occupation influences consumer behaviour by determining income levels, which in turn influences purchasing power and lifestyle choices (Solomon *et al.*, 2018). Professionals with higher incomes may exhibit more frequent online shopping behaviours and a preference for premium brands, often seeking out luxury goods, high-end electronics and exclusive services that reflect their social status (Gomez Albrecht *et al.*, 2019:12). Conversely, those in lower-paying occupations might be more price-sensitive (Rightford, 2021:148) and look for discounts, deals and budget-friendly options available online (Gomez Albrecht *et al.*, 2019:5). Furthermore, they might rely heavily on online platforms like eBay or Amazon for affordable purchases, driven by the need to maximise their limited financial resources (Smith, 2024).

Economic circumstances, including income, savings and debt, directly impact purchasing power and consumption choices (Rosenthal & Cardoso, 2016:127). In times of economic uncertainty, such as during a recession, consumers may cut back on discretionary spending and prioritise essential goods (Popadynets *et al.*, 2017:26). Online shopping can provide an attractive alternative due to the availability of discounts, easier price comparisons and the convenience of home delivery (Rizq & Muslichah, 2023:250). Consumers with higher economic stability might continue to make frequent online purchases, including non-essential luxury items, while those facing financial constraints may focus on necessities and seek value-for-money deals (Popadynets *et al.*, 2017:26; Rizq & Muslichah, 2023:250).

Lifestyle, which reflects an individual's activities, interests and opinions, provides insights into their preferences and behaviours (Kotler & Keller, 2016:185; Rightford, 2021:148;). Individual factors impact online purchase behaviour by shaping individuals' product preferences, influencing decision-making by affecting how much they can and want to spend and shaping purchase intentions by aligning with their lifestyle and individual goals (Meyer, 2021). Understanding these individual factors is crucial for tailoring marketing strategies to meet the specific needs of different consumer segments (Van Heerden, 2019). Recognising the diversity in individual circumstances

within the South African market *allows* organisations to create more individualised and effective marketing approaches (Nsahlai *et al.*, 2020:3).

Understanding these individual factors allows marketers to tailor their online strategies effectively. By dividing their audience by age, occupation, economic situation and lifestyle, organisations can develop targeted marketing campaigns that cater to the unique needs and preferences of different consumer segments (Bucko *et al.*, 2018:11). Following the discussion on external factors, the focus now shifts to internal factors, which delve into the psychological elements that shape consumer behaviour and play a crucial role in online purchasing decisions.

3.2.2 Internal factors

Internal factors refer to an individual's psychological and individual characteristics that influence their buying behaviour (Gowpall & Williams, 2023:92). These factors encompass individual traits, self-concept, motivations, perceptions, learning processes and attitudes. Unlike external factors, which are shaped by the broader environment, internal factors are intrinsic to the consumer and drive their unique responses to marketing stimuli (Gowpall & Williams, 2023:105). Understanding internal factors is key to appreciating how consumers form preferences, make decisions and develop brand loyalty (Sakalauskas & Kriksciuniene, 2024:27). Internal factors impact online purchase behaviour by driving individual preferences and motivations, influence decision-making by shaping how information is processed and evaluated and shape purchase intentions through individual attitudes and perceptions of brands (Hoyer *et al.*, 2017:286). In the context of the South African market, recognising the interplay of these internal influences with external conditions can help organisations create more individualised and effective marketing approaches (Nkosi, 2024:49).

3.2.2.1 Personality and self-concept

Personality and self-concept are internal factors that shape consumer behaviour (Alsaker & Kroger, 2020:92). Personality encompasses the unique psychological traits that result in consistent and lasting reactions to environmental factors (McCrae & Costa, 2021:1). Traits such as extroversion versus introversion and risk-taking versus risk-averse tendencies, influence consumer preferences and buying behaviour (Solomon *et al.*, 2018). As such, an extroverted individual might be more inclined towards social and adventurous products, whereas a risk-averse individual may prefer products with proven reliability (Hoyer *et al.*, 2017:289). Self-concept, the perception of oneself, also plays a critical role in how consumers behave (Alsaker & Kroger, 2020:92). Consumers often make purchases that reflect their self-identity and align with their self-

image (Epstein, 1980). For instance, someone who sees themselves as environmentally conscious might prefer sustainable products (Nkosi, 2024:48).

Personality impacts online purchase behaviour by driving preferences for specific types of products and brands (Pasharibu & Nurhidayah, 2021:733), influences decision-making by affecting how consumers approach risk and novelty and shapes purchase intentions by aligning with their self-concept and identity (DHL, 2024). Grasping the relationship between personality and self-concept enables marketers to design products and craft messages that truly connect with their target audience (Solomon *et al.*, 2018). In South Africa, where identity can be influenced by various cultural and social factors, understanding personality and self-concept can provide deep insights into consumer behaviour, allowing for more tailored marketing strategies (Nkosi, 2024:48). Personality and self-concept are closely intertwined with psychological factors, as they shape and are shaped by the underlying motivations, perceptions and attitudes that drive consumer behaviour (Patton, 2020).

3.2.2.2 Psychological factors

Psychological factors such as motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes significantly influence consumer behaviour (Hoyer *et al.*, 2017:287). These elements are central to understanding why consumers make certain purchasing decisions and how they interact with online shopping platforms.

Motivation is a key psychological factor, often driven by an individual's needs, as depicted in various theories like Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the Affective Behavioral Cognitive (ABC) Model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Maslow, 1943:370). According to Maslow's hierarchy, consumers prioritise essential needs, such as food and safety, before considering higher-level desires like self-fulfilment or luxury items. For instance, consumers might first secure basic necessities like groceries before purchasing non-essential items like online learning courses for personal growth (Ajzen, 1991). In online shopping, a motivated consumer could be influenced by factors such as convenience or product variety, making them more inclined to complete a purchase (Nguyen *et al.*, 2022:6).

Perception significantly impacts how consumers view and engage with products and brands. This process involves selecting, organising and interpreting information to form opinions and preferences (Solomon *et al.*, 2018). In the context of online shopping, perception can be shaped by various factors, including website design, user reviews, product descriptions and visual elements (Tao *et al.*, 2022:4). A well-structured website with clear information and positive customer feedback can foster trustworthiness, leading to higher conversion rates (Kingsnorth,

2022:131). Positive perceptions of an online store's reliability and quality often enhance purchase intentions, especially in markets where online trust is still growing (Torkington, 2021).

Learning also plays a vital role in consumer behaviour, as it involves changes in behaviour based on experience (Hoyer *et al.*, 2017:290). Consumers' past experiences with online shopping whether positive, like timely deliveries, or negative, like delayed shipments shape their future buying behavior (Meyer, 2021). Moreover, learning can occur through observation, where consumers are influenced by recommendations from influencers or peers on social media platforms (Mulla & Narhe, 2023:2767). These experiences and observations build knowledge and affect attitudes towards online shopping, thereby influencing repeat purchase behaviours.

Beliefs and attitudes are established over time through experience and learning and they greatly impact consumer preferences and loyalty (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Attitudes reflect a consumer's consistent positive or negative responses towards specific products or services (Chandra *et al.*, 2022:1530). Consumers who have formed positive attitudes towards online shopping, often due to past satisfactory experiences, are more likely to continue purchasing online (Nkosi, 2024:51). Similarly, beliefs about a brand's quality and trustworthiness, shaped by past experiences, customer service and marketing communications, strongly impact purchase intentions (Benitez *et al.*, 2023).

In the South African context, understanding these psychological factors is crucial for developing effective marketing strategies that resonate with the unique needs and motivations of consumers (Nkosi, 2024:49). In South Africa, where trust in online shopping is still evolving, understanding and positively influencing consumer attitudes and perceptions is essential for organisations aiming to expand their online presence (Nkosi, 2024:49).

3.3 Consumer attitudes

Consumer attitudes are one of the most significant predictors of purchase behaviour, especially in online shopping contexts (Ajzen, 1991; Chandra *et al.*, 2022; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Research indicates that a consumer's attitude is a person's overall evaluation or feeling about a product or service directly influences their likelihood of making an online purchase (Naseri *et al.*, 2021:656). Positive attitudes towards online shopping increase purchase likelihood, driven by factors, such as trust, ease of use and considerations of privacy and security (Harrigan *et al.*, 2021: 102246). Attitudes serve as a mediator in the decision-making process, bridging various influencing factors with actual purchase intention (Hoyer *et al.*, 2017:287).

Seasoned online shoppers, who have established positive attitudes through prior online experiences, often demonstrate a stronger inclination towards future purchases (Rightford, 2021:148). Additionally, external influences, such as online reviews and influencer marketing,

shape these attitudes, further influencing purchase intentions (Smith, 2024). Recognising the centrality of attitudes in consumer behaviour, this study examines attitudes as a primary factor in understanding online purchase intentions.

In the South African market, where trust in online shopping is still developing, influencing consumer attitudes is essential for marketers aiming to boost purchase intentions and enhance market penetration (Nkosi, 2024:49). By addressing the factors that shape consumer attitudes, businesses can create more impactful and engaging marketing messages, fostering trust and deepening connections with their audience (Torkington, 2021). This focus on attitudes as a pivotal element in consumer decision-making underscores its importance in driving strategic advantages for e-commerce growth in South Africa.

3.4 Attitudes Models

This section provides the needed historical context to explain the development of this study's model, namely the attitude towards remarketing and retargeting ads model. This requires defining attitude as a concept and delineating the existing models as they develop over time and form the foundation of the suggested model.

Attitudes, as described by Waarts *et al.* (1997:37), represent an “acquired, relatively long-term stance” that individuals adopt towards various entities, such as individuals, products, activities or organisations. These stances are not innate but develop through life's learning and growth phases (Himansu, 2009). Kirchheimer (2013) highlights that attitudes comprise a blend of values, beliefs and perceptions, which aligns with Schiffman *et al.* (2010:246) who assert that attitudes dictate how individuals act towards objects. An attitude is essentially a long-lasting perspective that an individual develops towards a specific individual or organisation (Bauer *et al.*, 2020:107). This stance is not inherent but is developed over time through a combination of factors, such as values, beliefs, perceptions, education and experiences (Cacioppo *et al.*, 2018:131). Schiffman *et al.* (2010:247) further note that attitudes are not just learned but also motivational, driving consumers towards or away from certain behaviours. This motivational aspect underscores the importance of marketers understanding and potentially altering consumer attitudes to favour their products or organisations (Himansu, 2009).

Understanding that attitudes are formed through learning and experience underscores their malleable nature (Meyer, 2021). Despite their consistency, attitudes can change in response to external factors. This dynamic aspect of attitudes is particularly relevant to marketers, who recognise the potential to influence consumer attitudes through strategic adjustments in marketing and advertising efforts (Singh *et al.*, 2024:55). Changing consumer attitudes towards

more favourable perceptions of an organisation and products is often a primary goal in marketing strategies (Camilleri & Filieri, 2023: 103575).

Considering the crucial role of attitudes in consumer behaviour, various models have been created to explain, interpret and predict how attitudes towards objects (Gerlich, 2023:502), including attitudes towards advertising, affect behaviour in consumption-related scenarios (Sahin & Soylemez, 2024:40). As such, attitudes models are essential for marketers seeking to understand and leverage the complex relationship between consumer attitudes and behaviours to refine their strategies and ultimately drive more favourable consumer actions.

In the context of advertising, understanding and influencing attitudes are crucial (Hudders & Cauberghe, 2018:198), as favourable attitudes towards advertising can significantly impact consumers' receptiveness to marketing messages and their subsequent behaviour (Kaur, 2021). This is why the study of attitudes towards advertising models is critical to carefully understand and effectively engage with consumers (Maseeh *et al.*, 2021:34).

3.4.1 Tricomponent model of attitudes

The tricomponent model of attitudes explains that attitudes are composed of three key components, namely cognitive, affective and conative (Wu & Tsai, 2017:24). The cognitive component pertains to the beliefs, knowledge and perceptions that an individual holds about an attitude object. The tricomponent model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding consumer attitudes, which can be utilised to predict consumer behaviour and design effective marketing strategies (Solomon, 2016). The tri-component attitudes model is displayed in Figure 3.1.

First, this model clarifies the internal components of attitudes and how they are formed (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975:302). The tri-component attitudes model suggests that attitudes consist of three elements: cognitive, affective and conative (Schiffman & Kanuk *et al.*, 2014:91). Although these components are interrelated, their importance may vary depending on the consumer's motivation towards an attitude object (Ajzen, 1991:188). Belch and Belch (2012:11) further affirm the model of the tri-component attitude by categorising the cognitive component as an individual's beliefs about an object, the affective component as their feelings toward the object and the conative component as their readiness to act or respond to the object through behaviour.

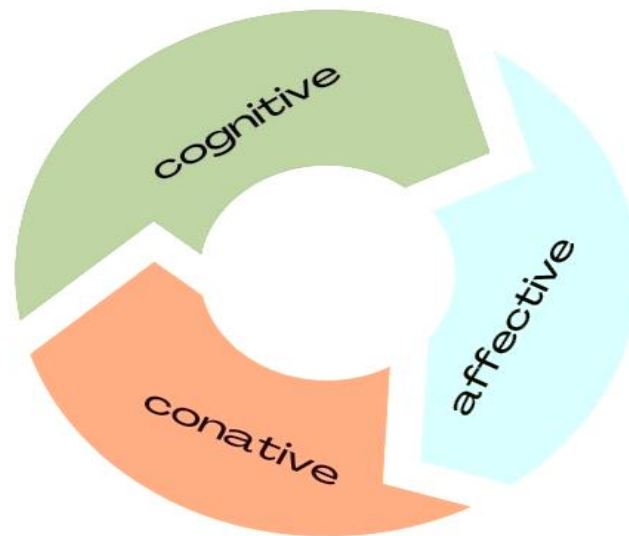


Figure 3.1: The tri-component attitudes model

Source: Schiffman *et al.* (2012:235).

The cognitive component, according to Young and Fazio (2013:404), includes the beliefs, knowledge, thoughts, opinions and perceptions formed through direct experience and information from various sources. These beliefs often involve characteristics attributed to the attitudes object and the outcomes of specific behaviours (Nkosi, 2024:48). Conversely, the affective component reflects an individual's emotions and feelings towards a product, brand, or service (Solomon, 2016). This encompasses judgments of positivity or negativity, which help in evaluating the attitude object. Emotional states can magnify experiences and influence later recollections, impacting behaviour (Torkington, 2021).

The third aspect, the conative component, involves an individual's propensity or inclination to perform a specific action or behaviour towards the attitude object (Chandra *et al.*, 2022: 1530). This component goes beyond just feelings and beliefs, focusing on how these elements translate into actual behaviour or intentions. The conative component is crucial in understanding consumer behaviour, as it is often assessed through buyer intention scales that measure a consumer's likelihood of purchasing a product or engaging in a particular behaviour (Sohn & Kim, 2020). It explores how a person engages in specific actions or behaviours concerning an attitude object (Kirchheimer, 2013). It is commonly evaluated by gauging the customer's intention to purchase a specific product or service (Barbu *et al.*, 2022: 16568).

3.4.2 The ABC model of attitudes and hierarchies of effects

The ABC model of attitudes is a vital framework in psychology that explains the complex relationship between affective, behavioural and cognitive components in shaping consumer attitudes (Solomon *et al.*, 2016:295). The affective component explores consumers' emotional responses towards products or services, influenced by past experiences and product characteristics (Ho *et al.*, 2017:704; Wu & Tsai, 2017:24). Positive experiences generate positive emotions and foster favourable attitudes, while negative experiences result in adverse attitudes (Derbaix & Pham, 1991:325). Emotional evaluations, often perceived as more authentic, often have a greater impact on consumer behaviour, compared to cognitive assessments alone (Young & Fazio, 2013:404).

The behavioural component captures the actions and intentions that reflect consumers' attitudes, with behaviour driven by attitudes and emotions varying significantly among individuals due to internal factors (Rhodes & Yao, 2015:1). This complexity is highlighted by the gap between cognitive and affective awareness and actual behaviour in sustainable purchasing decisions (Zhang *et al.*, 2021:1646). The cognitive component involves the beliefs consumers hold about an object, influenced by both cognitive assessments and emotions (Solomon *et al.*, 2016:285; Wu & Tsai, 2017:26).

The hierarchy of effects model explains how attitudes are formed through three distinct paths, namely high involvement, low involvement and experiential routes. The high involvement hierarchy, similar to problem-solving, starts with cognitive processing, leading to emotional responses and subsequent behaviours, typically in highly involved purchase decisions (Solomon, 2017:276). This path assumes high consumer involvement, which is often critiqued as not always being the case (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010). In contrast, the low involvement hierarchy relies on behavioural learning, where attitudes only form after the purchase is made as influenced by favourable or unfavourable experiences (Solomon, 2017:372). The experiential hierarchy focuses on hedonic consumption, where attitudes arise from sensory and emotional experiences with products, emphasising the role of intangible attributes like design and brand names in shaping consumer perceptions (Babbie, 2013; Solomon, 2017:373).

These models underscore the multifaceted nature of attitude formation, integrating cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects to provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer attitudes in various contexts (Youn & Shin, 2019:30). Considering the key role attitudes play in understanding consumer behaviour (Himansu, 2009), numerous models have been created to explain and predict the link between attitudes and behaviour in consumer contexts. One notable example is the multi-attribute attitudes model (Holbrook & Hulbert, 1975:375).

3.4.3 Multi-attribute attitudes models

Multi-attribute attitude models are a fundamental tool in understanding consumer behaviour, especially in marketing and psychology (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2014:199). These models propose that attitudes towards an object, product or service are shaped by an individual's beliefs about various attributes of the object and the significance they assign to these attributes (Holbrook & Hultbert, 1975:375). The core idea is that individuals assess an object by summing up the beliefs and evaluations across different attributes.

This model helps in analysing how different features influence overall attitudes and can assist marketers in modifying product attributes to improve consumer perceptions (Fishbein & Raven, 1967:35). Several models fall under the umbrella of multi-attribute attitude models, each offering a unique perspective on how attitudes are formed and altered. The Fishbein model posits that an individual's attitudes towards an object is a function of their beliefs about the object's attributes and their evaluations of these attributes (Fishbein, 1967:390). In contrast, the TRA extends this by incorporating the influence of subjective norms, highlighting how social pressures impact behavioural intentions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980:57; Burnkrant *et al.*, 1991:28-29).

The multi-attribute attitudes models remain a valuable tool for understanding and predicting consumer behaviour (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2014:199). By continuously refining these models and incorporating new insights from behavioural science, marketers and researchers can better capture the complexities of consumer attitudes, particularly in dynamic and diverse markets like South Africa (Maseeh *et al.*, 2021:34). It is evident that multi-attribute models not only aid in understanding current consumer attitudes but also provide a framework for predicting future behaviour based on changes in key attributes. This predictive capability is invaluable for marketers aiming to stay ahead in a competitive environment, ensuring their products and services align with evolving consumer expectations and preferences.

3.4.3.1 Attitudes towards object model

The attitudes towards object model, a seminal theoretical framework in psychology and marketing, elucidates how individuals form attitudes towards objects, ideas or entities (Rokeach & Kliejunas, 1972:123). Originating from the foundational works of Fishbein and Ajzen in the 1970s, this model integrates the concepts of beliefs, evaluations and attitudes, positing that an individual's attitudes towards an object are determined by their beliefs about the object and the evaluative aspects of these beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975:14). This model is essential for researchers and practitioners as it aids in predicting and influencing behaviour across various contexts. The model has evolved significantly, incorporating elements from cognitive and social psychology (Young & Fazio, 2013).

Fishbein's seminal work on attitude formation and Ajzen's research on attitudes-behaviour consistency have been crucial in its development (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980:58). Central to the model are components such as attitudes, beliefs and evaluations. Attitudes represent an individual's overall evaluation of an object, while beliefs are the specific attributes or outcomes associated with the object (Ajzen, 1991:179). These beliefs are weighted by evaluations, which reflect the positive or negative judgments about these attributes (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021:102).

One of the significant advantages of the Attitudes Towards Object Model is its robust predictive power (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Wassenaar *et al.*, 2019:437). It allows researchers to forecast behaviours based on underlying attitudes, making it applicable across diverse fields (Cacioppo & Petty, 1989). Although studies have shown that this model effectively predicts consumer behaviour, electoral choices and health-related actions (Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988), the model is not without its criticisms. Some scholars argue that it oversimplifies the complexity of attitudes and behaviours, potentially ignoring situational factors and emotional influences (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Methodologically, attitudes are typically measured using surveys and Likert scales, which quantify the strength of beliefs and evaluations. Ensuring the reliability and validity of these measurements is paramount, necessitating careful questionnaire design and pilot testing (DeVellis, 2016).

Incorporating the Attitudes Towards Object Model into a research design can enhance the theoretical grounding of studies and facilitate the development of hypotheses (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Wassenaar *et al.*, 2019:438). For instance, a study on environmental attitudes might hypothesise that positive beliefs about renewable energy's efficacy will correlate with favourable attitudes towards its adoption (Bamberg & Möser, 2007). Future research could explore the integration of this model with emerging trends in attitudes research, such as the role of implicit attitudes and the impact of digital media on attitude formation (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Valkenburg & Peter, 2013:221; Vianello & Bar-Anan, 2021:415).

In summary, the Attitudes Towards Object Model is a pivotal framework for understanding how attitudes are formed and how they influence behaviour (Wassenaar *et al.*, 2019:437). Its theoretical foundations, extensive applications and robust predictive power underscore its relevance in various research fields (Zhang *et al.*, 2021:1646). While it faces certain criticisms, advancements and methodological improvements continue to enhance its utility (Vianello & Bar-Anan, 2021:415). Integrating this model into research not only provides valuable insights but also contributes to the broader understanding of human behaviour and decision-making processes (Lăzăroiu *et al.*, 2020:890).

3.4.3.2 Attitudes towards behaviour model

The Attitudes Towards Behaviour Model is a theoretical framework used to understand and predict how individual attitudes influence behaviour (Schiffman *et al.*, 2012:240). Originating from the theory of planned behaviour proposed by Icek Ajzen in the late 1980s, this model integrates concepts from psychology and social science to explain the relationship between attitudes, intentions and behaviours (Ajzen, 1991:179). Historically, the attitude towards behaviour model evolved from earlier behavioural theories, notably the TRA by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975:16), which emphasised the role of intention in behaviour prediction. Ajzen extended this model to include perceived behavioural control, acknowledging that individuals' perceptions of their ability to perform a behaviour also play a crucial role (Ajzen, 1991:183). Key studies, such as those by Ajzen and Madden (1986:457-458), have been instrumental in validating and refining the model, highlighting its robustness and applicability across various contexts.

The core components of the Attitudes towards Behaviour Model include attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1988, 1991). Attitudes refer to the individual's positive or negative evaluations of performing a behaviour. Subjective norms involve the perceived social pressures to perform or not perform the behaviour, while perceived behavioural control refers to the individual's perception of their ability to perform the behaviour (Van Zanten, 2005:49-61). These components interact to shape behavioural intentions, which in turn influence actual behaviour (Ajzen, 1991:179). Methodologically, attitudes within the Attitudes towards Behaviour Model are typically measured using surveys and Likert scales, which assess the strength and direction of individual attitudes (Heo *et al.*, 2021:368). Best practices for data collection involve ensuring reliability and validity through rigorous survey design and pilot testing (Ajzen, 2002:16). Techniques like factor analysis can help confirm the construct validity of the measures. In contrast, test-retest reliability can ensure consistency over time (Ajzen, 2002, 2011).

The Attitudes towards Behaviour Model has been applied in numerous contexts, demonstrating its versatility. In marketing, for instance, it helps understand consumer purchase intentions and predict buying behaviour (Nkosi, 2024:48). Studies like those by Sheppard, Hartwick and Warshaw (1988:325) and Ajzen (2018:529) have shown how attitudes towards products, combined with social influences and perceived control, can predict consumer decisions. Similarly, in health psychology, the model has been used to predict behaviours such as exercise, diet and smoking cessation, providing insights into how attitudes and perceptions influence health-related actions (Godin & Kok, 1996:95; Jaiswal & Kant, 2018:60).

One of the main advantages of the Attitudes towards Behaviour Model is its predictive power. By considering attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, the model offers a

comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing behaviour (Lee, 2009:130). Its applicability across different contexts makes it a valuable tool for researchers and practitioners. Empirical evidence, such as the meta-analyses by Armitage and Conner (2001:481), supports the model's robustness in predicting a wide range of behaviours, from consumer choices to health actions. Despite its strengths, the Attitudes towards Behaviour Model is not without criticisms and limitations. One major criticism is its reliance on self-reported measures, which can be subject to biases and inaccuracies (Armitage & Conner, 2001:481). Additionally, some researchers argue that the model does not fully account for the complexities of human behaviour, such as the role of emotions and unconscious processes (Sniehotta *et al.*, 2014:2). Counterarguments to these criticisms include methodological advancements in measuring attitudes and incorporating additional variables to enhance the model's explanatory power (Lim, 2018:6).

Future research could further develop the Attitudes Towards Behaviour Model by integrating new theoretical insights and empirical findings. Innovations might include exploring the role of digital and social media in shaping attitudes and behaviours or examining how cultural differences influence the model's components (Schutte, 2023). Emerging trends in studying attitudes, such as the use of big data and machine learning, offer new opportunities for enhancing the model's predictive accuracy and applicability (Abkenar *et al.*, 2021:101517).

In conclusion, the Attitudes towards Behaviour Model remains a vital framework for understanding the intricate relationship between attitudes and behaviour (Ajzen, 2018:529). Its theoretical foundations, empirical support and practical applications across various fields underscore its relevance (Lim, 2018:7). By critically engaging with the literature and considering both strengths and weaknesses, researchers can continue to refine and apply this model to advance the understanding of human behaviour (Ajzen, 2018:529; Heo *et al.*, 2021:368). This balanced and analytical approach ensures the model's ongoing contribution to the field and its adaptability to new research challenges (Jaiswal & Kant, 2018:60; Nkosi, 2024:48).

3.4.3.3 Theory of reasoned action (TRA) model

The TRA model is a prominent model in social psychology that aims to predict and understand human behaviour. Developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this model posits that an individual's behavioural intentions are the most immediate determinant of their actions. Figure 3.2 illustrates the TRA model.

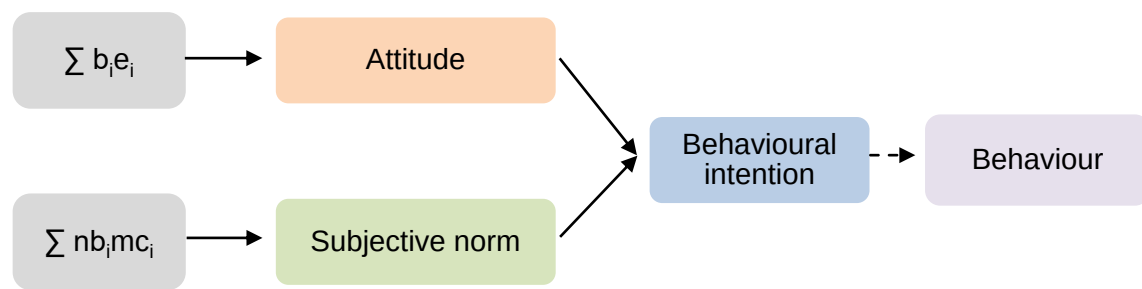


Figure 3.2: Theory of reasoned action (TRA) model

Source: Taylor and Todd (1995:138).

Understanding this model is crucial as it provides a robust framework for predicting behavioural outcomes based on underlying attitudes and social norms, making it invaluable in fields such as marketing, health communication and consumer behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The historical development of the TRA model can be traced back to the work of Fishbein and Ajzen, who sought to integrate the concepts of attitudes and behaviour in a cohesive theoretical framework (Ajzen, 2012). Their landmark studies, such as the seminal book "Belief, attitudes, intention and Behaviour: An Introduction to Theory and Research" published in 1975, laid the foundation for understanding how beliefs and evaluations shape attitudes, which in turn influence behavioural intentions and actions (Madden *et al.*, 1992). The core components of the model include attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norms and behavioural intentions. Attitudes are shaped by beliefs about the outcomes of the behaviour and the evaluations of these outcomes. Subjective norms refer to perceived social pressures to perform or not perform the behaviour, influenced by normative beliefs and the motivation to comply with these beliefs (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

The TRA model has been widely applied across various fields, including marketing, psychology and health behaviour, to predict and understand human behaviour (Davis *et al.*, 1989; Karahanna *et al.*, 1999; Liker & Sindi, 1997; Nysveen *et al.*, 2005; Wu & Chen, 2005). Recent studies continue to validate and expand the application of the TRA model. Vallerand and Houlfort (2019) found that attitudes and subjective norms were significant predictors of physical activity intentions and behaviours among older adults, highlighting their role in promoting active lifestyles in health psychology. Similarly, Wang *et al.* (2020) show that attitudes and subjective norms significantly influenced university students' intentions to participate in online courses during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the TRA model's relevance in digital education. Furthermore, Han and Hyun (2018) applied the TRA model to environmental psychology, identifying that positive

attitudes towards eco-friendly practices and strong subjective norms were crucial in predicting hotel guests' pro-environmental behaviours. Additionally, Kim *et al.* (2021) found that attitudes towards organic food and subjective norms were strong predictors of purchase intentions. Finally, Basu *et al.* (2021:36) explored the TRA model in the context of social media usage among adolescents, finding that attitudes towards social media and perceived social pressure significantly influenced intentions to use social media platforms.

Future research could explore innovations and refinements of the TRA model to enhance its predictive accuracy and applicability (Ajina, 2019:1553). Emerging trends, such as the integration of digital and social media influences offer new avenues for understanding how online social networks impact attitudes and behaviours (Smith, 2024). Additionally, examining the role of emotions and unconscious biases in shaping attitudes could provide deeper insights and enhance the model's comprehensiveness, as suggested by recent studies on behavioural economics and psychology (Ajzen, 2020; Yzer & Gilasevitch, 2019).

The TRA lies in its systematic approach and robust theoretical foundations, contributing significantly to marketing, psychology and health communication (Barbu *et al.*, 2021:16568). By critically engaging with the literature and addressing both its strengths and limitations, researchers can harness the TRA model to design more effective studies and interventions (Kumar *et al.*, 2023:118). While the TRA model offers valuable insights into how attitudes and subjective norms influence intentions, it does not fully account for behaviours over which individuals have incomplete control (Ajzen, 1991:182). This extended model will be explored further in the next section.

3.4.3.4 Theory of planned behaviour (TPB) model

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB), introduced by Icek Ajzen in 1985, builds on the TRA, co-developed with Martin Fishbein in 1980, to more thoroughly predict intentional behaviours (Ajzen, 1985). Although the TRA proposed that behavioural intentions are shaped by attitudes and subjective norms, it did not fully account for behaviours lacking complete volitional control (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980). The following figure illustrates the TPB model. Thus, the TPB model introduced perceived behavioural control (PBC) to address this gap, considering the ease or difficulty of performing behaviours as perceived by individuals (Ajzen, 1985). Since its inception, the TPB model has evolved to include factors like emotions, habits and contextual influences to enhance its explanatory power (Ajzen, 1991). Emotions capture the affective response to behaviour, while habits acknowledge the impact of past behaviour on future actions independently of intentions and attitudes (Taylor & Todd, 1995).

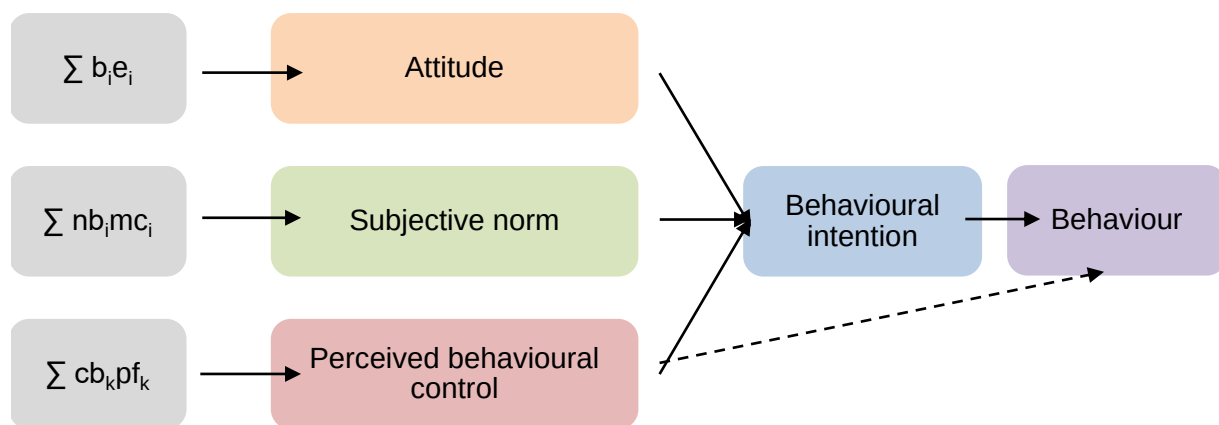


Figure 3.3: Theory of planned behaviour (TPB) model

Source: Taylor and Todd (1995:139)

Contextual factors recognise the significant role of environment and situational conditions (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen's research has validated the TPB model across various domains, including health behaviours like smoking cessation and exercise (Ajzen, 1988, 1991; Conner & Sparks, 2015), consumer behaviour, such as purchasing decisions and brand loyalty (Gagné & Deci, 2015; Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2016) and educational outcomes, demonstrating its robustness and broad applicability (Ajzen, 1991). Similarly, Armitage and Conner (2018) provide evidence that integrating individual identity and past behaviour can enhance the TPB model's application in environmental psychology. Additionally, past behaviour is shown to be a strong predictor of future behaviour, suggesting that incorporating these elements could improve the model's ability to predict environmentally friendly behaviours. Finally, a meta-analysis by McEachan *et al.* (2011) highlighted the importance of integrating emotional and habitual factors into the TPB model. Their comprehensive review confirmed the model's robustness but pointed out that emotions and habits are significant predictors of long-term behaviours.

In conclusion, the TPB model has undergone significant evolution since its introduction, validated and refined through numerous studies (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen, 1991). It remains an essential framework for comprehending human behaviour by integrating attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991:179). The model's ongoing relevance in behavioural research highlights its importance. Future research may expand the TPB model by integrating additional factors such as anticipated regret, moral norms, individual identity, past behaviour, contextual factors, intrinsic motivation and emotional and habitual influences (Conner, 2020:1). These enhancements support the model's foundational principles and offer a more comprehensive understanding of the complex factors driving human behaviour, paving the way

for more effective interventions and policies across various domains (Ajina, 2019:1553; Basu *et al.*, 2022:396).

3.4.3.5 Attitudes towards the advertisement model

Understanding how consumers perceive advertising is crucial for developing effective marketing strategies (Mehta, 2023a). Attitudes towards advertising are described as a tendency to react positively or negatively to a specific advertising stimulus during a given exposure (Lutz, 1985; Sander *et al.*, 2021:430). The correlation between consumer attitudes towards advertising brands is a key area of interest for marketers (Mishra & Maity, 2021:1676).

Research has highlighted the evolving relationship between advertisements and consumer buying behaviour (Koo, Kim & Kim, 2022:1; KV *et al.*, 2021:1). Considering the transformation of consumer attitudes towards advertising models in the digital era, the study by Sanesh *et al.* (2022:2211) presents a comprehensive review of the literature on attitudes towards advertising, both in traditional and digital media. This reflects a broader trend that shows how digital media's individualisation and interaction can encourage more favourable consumer attitudes (Chandra *et al.*, 2022: 1530). Furthermore, the emotive power of advertisements reveals that consumers' attitudes towards an advertisement have a more significant influence on their overall attitudes towards the advertisement compared to the emotions elicited by the advertisement (Sciulli & Bebeko, 2019:878). Moreover, the meta-analysis conducted by Maseeh *et al.* (2021:34) on mobile advertising effectiveness provides insights into the broader digital advertising landscape, highlighting the key attributes that shape positive consumer attitudes towards mobile advertisements.

A shift in trends from traditional advertising models towards a more sophisticated consumer-centric approach has been witnessed in recent years, where marketers are beginning to realise that consumers are not just recipients of marketing messaging but rather active consumers within the digital ecosystem (Bamberger *et al.*, 2020:327). By understanding consumer psychology and respecting their sentiments, marketers can develop advertising strategies that seamlessly integrate into the digital experience in a way that benefits both organisations and consumers (Sander *et al.*, 2021:430).

3.4.3.6 Attitudes towards social media posts model

The "Attitude Towards Social Media Posts" model explores individuals' psychological tendencies when evaluating social media content (Rüther *et al.*, 2023). This model is crucial for understanding how individuals perceive, interpret and respond to the vast amount of information shared across platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (Ferreira & Barbosa, 2017; Hughes, 2022;

Shopify, 2023). Attitudes towards social media posts are shaped by three main components: cognitive, affective and behavioural (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2014). These components work together to shape how consumers engage with content, influencing their decisions to like, share, comment on or ignore posts (Baldwin, 2023). The model has gained particular significance in regions like South Africa, where social media is not just a tool for communication but a powerful influence on consumer behaviour and public opinion (De Mooij, 2019:218).

The cognitive component of this model refers to the beliefs or thoughts an individual holds about social media content (Zhang *et al.*, 2021). For instance, consumers may assess whether the information in a post is credible, useful or reliable (De Mooij, 2019:218; R  ther *et al.*, 2023). This cognitive evaluation is particularly significant in contexts where misinformation is prevalent, such as in South Africa. According to Oloo (2022), the prevalence of misinformation on social media has led South African consumers to become more discerning about the credibility of sources, often relying on their pre-existing beliefs, knowledge and experiences to evaluate content. This cognitive process is essential as it determines whether consumers trust and engage with the content or dismiss it as untrustworthy, ultimately influencing their overall perception of social media platforms (Benitez *et al.*, 2023:1).

The affective component involves the emotional reactions that consumers experience when interacting with social media posts (Schiffman & Kanuk 2014). These emotions can range from positive feelings, such as happiness or inspiration, to negative emotions like anger or frustration (Munaro *et al.*, 2021:1336). In the South African context, these emotional responses are often shaped by cultural norms and societal values (Lezar & van der Walt, 2023). A post that resonates with a consumer's cultural identity or addresses a relevant social issue may evoke a stronger emotional response, increasing engagement likelihood (Jones & Lee, 2022). Jones and Lee (2022) highlight that emotional responses in South Africa are deeply intertwined with the country's diverse cultural landscape, where content that aligns with social justice issues or cultural pride tends to elicit more intense emotional reactions (Strauss, 2022). These affective responses are critical as they not only drive consumer engagement but also influence how content is received and shared within online communities (Munaro *et al.*, 2021:1338).

The behavioural component of the model describes how attitudes formed through cognitive and affective processes translate into actions (Solomon *et al.*, 2016). This includes behaviours such as liking, sharing, commenting or even reporting posts (Swani & Labrecque, 2020). In South Africa, these behaviours are influenced by a range of factors, including social norms, peer influence and the perceived impact of one's online actions (Wahid & Gunarto, 2022). Mkhize (2022) points out that social media behaviour in South Africa is often shaped by the collectivist nature of many communities, where peer opinions and social influence play a significant role in

how content is interacted with. Understanding these behaviours is vital for organisations and marketers who seek to design content that not only resonates with their target audience but also drives meaningful engagement. As such, posts that receive significant engagement within a community are more likely to be viewed favourably, reflecting the importance of social validation in shaping online behaviour (Callaghan, 2022).

The "Attitudes towards Social Media Posts" model provides a comprehensive framework for analysing how individuals interact with social media content. By understanding the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of these attitudes, stakeholders, such as organisations, policymakers and researchers can better navigate the complexities of social media engagement in a diverse society like South Africa. This understanding is essential for crafting strategies that are both culturally relevant and effective in influencing consumer behaviour (Munaro *et al.*, 2021:1336). As social media continues to evolve and shape public discourse, particularly in dynamic contexts like South Africa, the insights gained from this model will be invaluable in fostering a more informed and responsible online community (Nkosi, 2024:49).

3.4.4 Attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting advertisements

The "Attitudes towards Remarketing and Retargeting Strategies" model builds upon the foundational understanding of consumer attitudes towards social media posts, offering a more focused examination of how consumers perceive and respond to targeted advertising strategies online (TMO Contributor, 2023; Zarouali *et al.*, 2017:160). While some consumers appreciate the individualised nature of remarketing and retargeting, others may view these strategies as intrusive or manipulative (Suarsa, 2020). By analysing how consumers perceive the credibility and relevance of these advertisements, their emotional responses to being retargeted and their subsequent behaviours, such as clicking on advertisements or making purchases, this model provides insights into the complexities of consumer interactions with digital advertising (Swani & Labrecque, 2020). The relevance of this model is particularly significant as organisations continue to invest heavily in remarketing and retargeting to optimise their advertising spend and increase conversion rates (Wen & Imamizu, 2022:211).

3.4.4.1 Attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting advertisements model

Remarketing primarily aims to re-engage past customers or consumers who have already interacted with a brand (Dollwet, 2020:16). Remarketing is executed through email campaigns targeting past purchasers or highly engaged consumers. Remarketing's capacity to re-engage with past consumers is vital for increasing conversion rates in the South African market (TMO Contributor, 2023). An article from DHL (2024) stipulated that South African consumers, like their

global counterparts, have diverse perceptions and reactions to remarketing practices, influenced by various cultural, social and economic factors unique to the country.

In South Africa, the rapid growth of internet penetration and mobile connectivity has led to an increase in online shopping and digital interactions (Go-Globe, 2023a; Reekie *et al.*, 2022). This growth presents both opportunities and challenges for marketers employing remarketing strategies. South African consumers who appreciate the convenience and individualisation offered by remarketing will likely respond positively to tailored advertisements that align with their interests and previous online behaviour (Sukhenko, 2022). These consumers view remarketing as a helpful reminder or an individualised shopping assistant that enhances their online experience (Laudon & Traver, 2021). There is also a significant segment of South African consumers who may harbour negative attitudes towards remarketing (Schutte, 2023). These negative attitudes can arise from concerns over privacy, data security and the intrusive nature of targeted advertisements (Politz, 2023; Yaseen *et al.*, 2023:107). In a country where digital literacy levels vary widely, there may be a lack of understanding about how remarketing works, leading to mistrust and discomfort with the perceived monitoring of online activities (Magee, 2023).

Consequently, marketers need to ensure that their remarketing efforts are not perceived as invasive or excessive (De Cicco *et al.*, 2021). Providing clear information about data usage, offering opt-out options and respecting user privacy are critical steps in building trust and fostering positive attitudes. Moreover, cultural nuances play a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes (Schutte, 2023). According to the African Marketing Confederation (AMC) (2023), South African consumers might respond differently to localised content that resonates with their cultural identity and preferences. Tailoring remarketing campaigns to reflect local language, values and trends can enhance relevance and acceptance among the target audience (Varnali, 2021:95). Understanding and addressing the unique attitudes of South African consumers towards remarketing is essential for the success of digital marketing strategies (Go-Globe, 2023a). By balancing individualisation with privacy and cultural sensitivity, organisations can create effective remarketing campaigns that engage and convert South African online consumers (Mehta, 2023b).

3.4.4.2 Attitudes towards retargeting

Retargeting is online advertising targeting consumers based on their previous internet actions (Jung, 2017:306). It involves tracking consumers who visit a website and then displaying relevant advertisements as they browse other websites (Tudoran, 2019:150). This strategy aims to re-engage potential customers who have shown an initial interest but did not complete a purchase (Jung, 2017:306).

The perceived ethicality of retargeting is a crucial factor influencing consumer attitudes (Zarouali *et al.*, 2017:160). Some consumers view retargeting as intrusive and a violation of privacy, feeling uncomfortable with the idea of being followed online (Strycharz *et al.*, 2019b:53). This perception can stem from a lack of transparency about data collection and usage (Chaudhuri *et al.*, 2023:467). Conversely, others appreciate the individualised nature of retargeting advertisements, finding them helpful in discovering relevant products or services (Aaron Hall, 2023). Ethical concerns are often mitigated when organisations communicate their data practices and offer easy opt-out options (Saahar *et al.*, 2019:34). In South Africa, retargeting statistics indicate a growing adoption of this marketing strategy (DHL, 2024). Studies have shown that click-through rates for retargeted advertisements are significantly higher than for traditional display advertisements, highlighting their effectiveness in capturing consumer attention (AMC, 2023; Wen *et al.*, 2022:207). Research conducted by the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) of South Africa in 2021 noted that retargeting campaigns achieved an average click-through rate of 0.7 percent, compared to 0.1 percent for standard display advertisements (Juntilla & de Braux, 2024). This data underscores the potential of retargeting to enhance marketing performance in the South African context (Chaudhuri *et al.*, 2023:467).

Industry adoption of retargeting has increased as more organisations recognise its benefits (Juntilla & de Braux, 2024). Organisations across various sectors, from retail to finance, have integrated retargeting into their digital marketing strategies to boost conversion rates and maximise return on investment (National Law Review, 2020). Advanced technologies, such as AI and machine learning, have refined retargeting practices, enabling more precise and effective advertisement placements to increase conversion rates and enhance consumer engagement (Hughes, 2022; Vestil, 2023).

Consumer attitudes towards retargeting significantly influence its effectiveness, particularly regarding purchase intentions (Song *et al.*, 2021:15). Consumers with positive attitudes towards retargeting advertisements are more likely to engage with and ultimately purchase from these advertisements (Brown *et al.*, 2021:567). Positive attitudes are often driven by the perceived relevance and individualisation of the advertisements, which can enhance the overall shopping experience (Guliyeva, 2023:13). Conversely, negative attitudes, which may arise from concerns about privacy and data security, can diminish the likelihood of making a purchase (Schutte, 2023). Therefore, organisations must balance individualisation with ethical considerations, ensuring transparency and respecting consumer privacy to foster positive attitudes and improve retargeting outcomes (Politz, 2023).

Mohan (2020:418) examined the effectiveness of retargeted advertisements, revealing that they significantly boost sales by targeting interested consumers at a lower cost. In contrast, Abirami

and Rajan (2022:2) noted that while retargeting provides individualised recommendations, it does not significantly change long-term purchase patterns. Arli (2024:879) highlights that when consumers perceive retargeted advertisements as invasive, it negatively influences brand perception. Lastly, the high adoption of programmatic advertising, driven by retargeting, underscores the need for marketers to be educated on how to optimise its use (Varnali, 2021:94). Overall, while retargeting shows effectiveness in some contexts, its ethical implications and variable impact on consumer behaviour necessitate careful consideration by marketers (Abirami & Rajan, 2022:2).

3.5 Influence of remarketing and retargeting strategies on online purchase intentions

In the digital marketing landscape, remarketing and retargeting have emerged as pivotal strategies designed to influence consumer online purchase intentions (Johansson & Wengberg, 2017:7; Kaulina & Kaulins, 2018:14; Kushwaha *et al.*, 2021:7). These techniques involve targeting consumers who have previously interacted with a brand but did not complete their actions, by displaying relevant advertisements across various online platforms (Kushwaha *et al.*, 2021:7). The effectiveness of these strategies hinges on several key factors, including conversion conditions (Pathak & Waghmare, 2020:14088), awareness, perceived value (Dehling *et al.*, 2019:4), perceived risk and organisational factors (Albayati *et al.*, 2020:3). Grasping the interplay of these factors is crucial for marketers seeking to optimise their digital campaigns and enhance conversion rates effectively (Wagner Mainardes *et al.*, 2019:447).

3.5.1 Online purchase intentions

Online purchase intention denotes a consumer's plan or decision to buy a product or service online. This intention is shaped by multiple factors, such as individual attitudes, perceived benefits and external influences like advertising or peer recommendations (Srivastava 2019:217; Irshad & Ahmad *et al.*, 2019:95). Consumers often choose online shopping due to its convenience, the broad range of available products and the potential for better pricing compared to traditional retail shopping (Sutherland, 2020:2). Online shopping allows for easy comparison of products and services, access to reviews from other consumers and sometimes more detailed product information which aids in making informed decisions (Schulze, 2020:2; Varnali, 2021:95).

The benefits of purchasing online are numerous and significantly influence consumer behaviour and purchase intentions (Nguyen *et al.*, 2022:6). Convenience stands out as the primary advantage, allowing consumers to shop anytime and from anywhere (Sivaram *et al.*, 2019:235). Online platforms often provide broader selections of products and services, compared to traditional retail stores, often at lower prices due to reduced overhead costs (Ha *et al.*, 2022:1547).

Consumers also benefit from easy access to reviews and ratings from other customers, which can help them make more informed decisions (Varnali, 2021:95). Jothimani *et al.* (2023:1509) affirm that purchasing online can lead to increased consumer satisfaction due to the ease of finding products and services that precisely meet their needs. From an organisational standpoint, online purchases can increase sales volumes and expand market reach (Ha *et al.*, 2022:1547). It offers cost savings, time efficiency and the comfort of shopping from home (Ha *et al.*, 2022:1546).

Organisations can encourage online purchases by optimising their website design, ensuring ease of use (Varnali, 2021:95), offering competitive pricing, providing detailed product descriptions and utilising effective online marketing strategies like targeted advertisements and social media campaigns (Karim *et al.*, 2021:97). However, despite its benefits, online purchasing also comes with drawbacks (Nguyen *et al.*, 2023:1). Consumers cannot physically inspect products before buying, leading to concerns about quality (Chaturvedi, 2019:5), risk of fraudulent websites and delays in deliveries (Tao *et al.*, 2022:4). The ease of online shopping can lead to impulse purchases and overspending (Zhu & Kanjanamekanant, 2021:42). This is supported by Jothimani *et al.* (2023:1509), who suggest that purchasing online can lead to increased consumer satisfaction due to the ease of finding products that precisely meet their needs. From an organisational perspective, Obukhovich *et al.* (2023:3) suggest that although targeted marketing strategies can increase impulse buying, this may not always be seen as a disadvantage.

Online purchasing offers significant advantages for organisations, including higher sales volumes and expanded market reach (Hill, 2020). To enhance consumer trust and encourage online purchases, organisations should focus on optimising website design for ease of use, providing detailed and accurate product descriptions, offering competitive pricing and implementing effective online marketing strategies (Torkington, 2021). These strategies may include targeted advertisements and social media campaigns to reach and engage potential customers more effectively (Karim *et al.*, 2021:97). Consumer attitudes towards online purchases can vary widely but are generally positive due to the convenience and benefits provided (Duarte *et al.*, 2018:162).

Trust and perceived risk significantly influence these attitudes (Tao *et al.*, 2022:4; Pathak & Pathak, 2017:33). Consumers tend to favour websites that offer secure payment options and clear, honest descriptions of products (Jeon *et al.*, 2017:130). A favourable user experience and efficient customer service can substantially boost consumers' trust in an online platform, which in turn encourages them to make repeat purchases (Wagner Mainardes *et al.*, 2019:447).

Understanding how social media shapes online purchase intentions has become a crucial area of research. Unlike traditional advertising, social media influences extend through reviews, promotions and personal recommendations, all of which significantly shape consumer decisions. However, while these influences can foster a readiness to buy, online purchase intentions alone

do not ensure a completed transaction (Sutherland, 2020:2). Conversion conditions such as website usability, trust and compelling calls-to-actions are critical factors that determine whether these intentions ultimately lead to a purchase (Vestil, 2023). Therefore, a deeper exploration of these conditions is essential to fully understand how consumer intentions are converted into actions.

3.5.2 Conversion conditions

The concept of a "conversion condition" is central to understanding marketing and organisational success, particularly in measuring the effectiveness of consumer engagement strategies (Torkington, 2021). Rooted in traditional sales techniques, this concept identifies the precise stage in a marketing funnel where a potential customer performs a desired action, like making a purchase or subscribing to a newsletter (Dejnak, 2024). With the advent of digital marketing, the definition of conversion conditions has expanded to include a variety of actions that support an organisation's objectives, from physical transactions to online activities (Chaffey & Smith, 2022).

Digital technologies have transformed how conversion conditions are implemented and measured. For instance, a confusing website design, unclear security measures and inefficient checkout processes can frustrate potential consumers, leading to abandoned carts and lost sales (Hughes, 2022), which in turn harm an organisation's bottom line and damage its brand reputation (Vestil, 2023). In contrast, implementing effective strategies like intuitive navigation and informative content can elevate consumer satisfaction, foster loyalty, encourage repeat purchases and generate positive word-of-mouth (Rane *et al.*, 2023). The efficacy of strategic conversion conditions in digital marketing is highlighted by research indicating that tailored approaches like retargeting advertisements with free shipping or limited-time discounts significantly increase purchase likelihood and consumer engagement (Fernandes *et al.*, 2022; Torkington, 2021). These strategies are not only about driving sales but also about creating a satisfying shopping experience that benefits both the consumer and the organisation in the long run (Kondrenko, 2024).

The significance of these conditions is further emphasised by studies that link positive conversion outcomes to online advertising, demonstrating that awareness and favourable attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting are crucial for effective online conversion (Torkington, 2021). This aligns with established theories on the influence of consumer attitudes on behavioural intentions (Ajzen, 1991:179). Such studies assess consumer responses on a scale, measuring not just binary outcomes but the degree of likelihood under specific conditions like message individualisation and brand trust, thereby providing insights into the direct impact of conversion conditions on online purchase intentions (Nishida, 2016; Joo & Teng, 2017:27; Kaulina & Kaulins,

2018; Pathak & Waghmare, 2020:14088). This comprehensive approach helps organisations tailor their digital strategies to optimise conversion rates and ensure sustainable growth (Torkington, 2021). Furthermore, awareness of retargeting and remarketing strategies is believed to enhance the ability of organisations to maintain consumer engagement and drive conversions (Makhitha & Mbedzi, 2022:106).

3.5.3 Awareness of retargeting and remarketing strategies

Awareness of retargeting and remarketing strategies plays a significant role in shaping the effectiveness of these strategies and the perception consumers have of these strategies (Sukhenko, 2022). These strategies are crucial elements of digital marketing, aimed at re-engaging consumers who have interacted with a brand before but didn't finalise a purchase (Dehling *et al.*, 2019:7). Understanding retargeting and remarketing is essential because it has a direct impact on how consumers view and respond to future marketing initiatives (Dehling *et al.*, 2019:1). By keeping the brand at the forefront of consumers' minds, this awareness can impact how responsive consumers are to targeted advertisements, potentially increasing the possibility of conversion (Pathak & Waghmare, 2020:14088). According to De Cicco *et al.* (2021), a heightened awareness of these strategies enables consumers to recognise and understand the purpose behind the individualised advertisements they encounter, which can enhance the perception of the brand and increase engagement rates.

A lack of awareness about retargeting and remarketing strategies can result in several negative outcomes (Maria *et al.*, 2019:107). Consumers might perceive retargeted advertisements as intrusive or random if they do not understand why they are seeing these advertisements. This misunderstanding can lead to increased irritation and reduced effectiveness of advertisement campaigns (Sander *et al.*, 2021:430). This latter study reports the correlation between low advertisement awareness and consumers' negative reactions to digital advertisements. Additionally, the potential for overexposure, where consumers become aware of being repeatedly targeted, may lead them to feel manipulated or overwhelmed. This can result in advertisement fatigue or negative feelings toward the brand being advertised (Capelle & Liquète, 2022:5).

When consumers are aware of retargeting and remarketing strategies, they are more likely to perceive these advertisements as helpful reminders rather than as unsolicited interruptions (De Cicco *et al.*, 2021). When consumers perceive retargeted and remarketing advertisements as beneficial reminders, it improves brand perception, raises engagement and boosts conversion rates by making the advertising relevant and educational (Makrides *et al.*, 2020:4). Additionally, advertisements customised to each consumer's unique interests, habits and needs resonate more effectively with consumers, fostering positive interactions (Kedet, 2021). The effectiveness

of these strategies hinges on maintaining a delicate balance between avoiding overuse, which can cause consumer fatigue, while simultaneously ensuring that the timing, relevance and quality of advertisements are optimal (Sivaram *et al.*, 2019:237).

The literature presents mixed findings on whether awareness of these marketing strategies directly influences consumer attitudes. Nguyen *et al.* (2023:5) found that increased awareness does not substantially alter consumer attitudes, emphasising the importance of advertisement relevance and privacy concerns for individuals. Smith (2024:414) argues that there is a direct influence since knowledgeable consumers are more likely to value the individualised approach of retargeting and remarketing if they are aware of its purpose and advantage. As such, there is a need to investigate how to bridge these gaps and offer a clearer understanding of how consumer awareness influences attitudes towards individualised advertisements.

Samat *et al.* (2017:299) suggest that advertisement awareness does not significantly impact consumer attitudes or purchase intentions towards the advertised products, while other studies present contrasting findings. For instance, Maria *et al.* (2019:107) and Sivaram *et al.* (2019:235) argue that advertising effectiveness and advertising awareness have a positive and direct impact on consumer purchase intentions. These findings underscore the importance of well-executed advertising campaigns in shaping consumer behaviour, as awareness plays a crucial role in influencing purchase decisions and driving the perceived value of the brand when effectively leveraged (Maria *et al.*, 2019:107).

3.5.4 Perceived value

Perceived value has drastically transformed with the advent of e-commerce (Laudon *et al.*, 2021). Zeithaml (1988:14) describes perceived value as a consumer's overall judgment of a product or service's utility, based on the comparison between what is received and what is given in return. Dodds and Monroe (1985:312) add that perceived value is how consumers evaluate the ratio between the perceived quality of a product or service and the perceived sacrifice made to obtain the product or service in question. According to Lerois-Werelds (2021:13), perceived value is a consumer's evaluation of the benefits and costs of a product or service, influencing their purchasing decisions and loyalty. Lara (2023) theorises perceived value as both the tangible and intangible aspects of a product or service, including functional utility, emotional resonance, social value, monetary worth and epistemic satisfaction.

This multifaceted construct is crucial in online remarketing and retargeting strategies, where individualised advertisements based on consumer behaviour aim to maximise relevance and appeal, thereby enhancing perceived value (Maria *et al.*, 2019:107). Furthermore, online remarketing and retargeting campaigns significantly impact advertising effectiveness by aligning

advertising content closely with individual consumer behaviours and preferences (Guliyeva, 2023:13). These strategies facilitate individualised engagement by reminding consumers of products or services they have previously considered or by offering tailored promotions, which enhance the emotional and monetary value of advertisements (Chandra *et al.*, 2022: 1530). By doing so, organisations can foster stronger connections with their consumers, encouraging repeat purchases and potentially increasing conversion rates (Dehling *et al.*, 2019).

The impact of these strategies on consumer decisions can be dual-edged. While effective remarketing can lead to increased consumer satisfaction and loyalty, there is also the risk of advertisement fatigue and irritation if the frequency and targeting are not managed sensitively (Capelle & Liquète, 2022:5; Lara, 2023). Consumers may perceive repeated advertisements as intrusive, especially if they lack relevance or are aggressive, thus negatively affecting the perceived value of the advertisements and potentially leading to brand disengagement (Aslam *et al.*, 2021; Mahmoud, 2014).

Organisations must carefully measure and manage the perceived value they create to harness the benefits while mitigating the negatives of online remarketing and retargeting (SafeOpt, 2023; Hunter *et al.*, 2023). Metrics like click-through rates, conversion rates and return on advertisement spend offer quantitative insights into the effectiveness of these advertising strategies, directly showing the value they add in terms of consumer engagement and financial returns (Hunter *et al.*, 2023). As a result, organisations should employ quantitative metrics such as click-through rates, conversion rates and return on advertising spend (Hunter *et al.*, 2023), in conjunction with qualitative measures like consumer feedback and engagement levels (Ma *et al.*, 2022), to assess and improve the effectiveness of their advertising initiatives.

Online remarketing and retargeting can greatly increase the perceived value of products or services, encouraging positive consumer behaviour. However, they must be implemented thoughtfully to prevent issues like consumer annoyance or advertisement fatigue (Srivastava, 2023:1291). Arli (2024:878) suggests that the perceived value associated with remarketing and retargeting does not have a significant direct influence on consumers' attitudes towards these strategies. Conversely, other research indicates a positive and significant impact of awareness and advertising effectiveness on both attitudes and purchase intentions (Zaremohzzabieh *et al.*, 2021:732). Informativeness is a key component in creating value for consumers through advertising (Feng *et al.*, 2023:1). By delivering relevant and valuable information, advertisements not only capture attention but also fulfil consumer needs, thereby enhancing the perceived value of the product or service being advertised (Mo *et al.*, 2023:4090). This perceived value, rooted in informativeness, is crucial because it builds trust and credibility, making consumers more receptive to the message being conveyed. As a result, when informativeness is effectively

integrated into remarketing and retargeting strategies, it significantly boosts their effectiveness, ensuring that consumers are more likely to engage with the repeated advertisements and ultimately take action (Zhou *et al.*, 2022).

3.5.4.1 Informativeness

In the ever-evolving landscape of digital marketing, online retargeting and remarketing have emerged as powerful tools for re-engaging website visitors and influencing their purchasing decisions (Darstaru, 2023). However, the effectiveness of these strategies hinges not just on targeting accuracy, but also on the quality of the information presented to consumers (Mohan, 2020:418). Ducoffe (1996:21) describes informativeness as the utility provided by advertising through the delivery of useful and meaningful information. Tsang *et al.* (2004:71) add that it is the degree to which consumers perceive that they receive valuable data from advertisements. Sama (2019:56) argues that informativeness encapsulates the ability of an advertisement to effectively communicate the attributes and benefits of a product or service, thereby influencing consumer attitudes and behaviours. As such, informativeness may be defined as the extent to which advertising communications provide essential, relevant and timely information to consumers, assisting them in their decision-making processes (Feng *et al.*, 2023:4). Before the digital age, informativeness was delivered through the traditional media, such as print, radio and television. Traditional media offered limited interactivity, where the challenge lay in presenting information in a compelling, yet comprehensive manner to engage a broad target audience (Darstaru, 2023). The shift to a more digitalised economy has emphasised the need for advertisements, particularly in online settings, to not only capture attention but also to offer substantial informational content that assists in the decision-making process (Alzubi, 2023:2).

In the past, advertisements were crafted with detailed product descriptions and informative content that aimed to educate consumers about various products and services (Darstaru, 2023). With the shift to online platforms, the dynamic has changed. Digital advertisements must now be concise yet rich with information, optimised for quick consumption, yet detailed enough to compete with online content (Brodherson *et al.*, 2022). This is particularly crucial in social media remarketing and retargeting, where advertisements are tailored based on consumer behaviour and preferences, making informativeness a key factor in recapturing the interest of potential consumers (Darstaru, 2023). Informativeness in online retargeting and remarketing empowers consumers through the provision of clear, relevant information to help them evaluate options and make purchasing decisions aligned with their needs (Beaumont *et al.*, 2022:246). Additionally, informativeness can reduce decision fatigue by presenting concise information to navigate complex choices (Lara, 2023). Informativeness also has drawbacks, where an overabundance of

information in retargeting advertisements can overwhelm consumers, leading them to ignore the message altogether (Few, 2022). Deceptive practices can exploit informativeness through misleading or incomplete information, manipulating consumers into decisions not in their best interests (Leighton, 2023). Furthermore, creating informative marketing materials requires significant investments in content creation and design expertise (Farman *et al.*, 2020:299; Few, 2022).

The relationship between informativeness and attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies is nuanced (Guliyeva, 2023:12). While some studies have found that informativeness directly enhances attitudes by making advertisements more relevant and valuable (Feng *et al.*, 2023:1), others suggest that the influence is not as straightforward (Leite *et al.*, 2024:307). The effectiveness of informativeness can vary based on factors such as advertisement frequency, personalisation and the consumer's initial attitudes towards the brand (Mo *et al.*, 2023:1). Therefore, while informativeness generally has a positive impact on attitudes and purchase intentions, its effectiveness can depend on how well the information is integrated into the overall advertising strategy, highlighting the complexity of consumer responses in digital advertising landscapes (Feng *et al.*, 2023:1; Leite *et al.*, 2024:307; Mo *et al.*, 2023:14090). The level of informativeness can also influence consumers' perceptions of risk, as overly complex or unclear information may lead to confusion and mistrust, potentially deterring purchase decisions (Magee, 2023).

3.5.5 Perceived risk

As technology continues to evolve, the landscape of online shopping undergoes significant changes, thereby influencing the perceived risks associated with online transactions (Siudibyo, 2020:88). The importance of understanding perceived risk in this evolving technological context cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts consumer trust and their willingness to engage in online transactions (Sun *et al.* 2023:16320). In online shopping, perceived risk is crucial in influencing consumer behaviour and decision-making (Oberemok, 2023).

Unlike traditional brick-and-mortar stores, where products can be physically inspected and evaluated, online transactions involve a degree of perceived risk (Ward, 2022). Pathak and Pathak (2017:33) define perceived risk as the perception of consumers regarding the uncertainty and adverse effects of engaging in a purchasing activity. As e-commerce technology has advanced, so has marketers' ability to mitigate these risks through targeted advertisements, creating a more personalised and seemingly secure shopping experience that can enhance online purchase intentions (Lina & Setiyanto 2021:149). As digital footprints become more traceable and

marketing strategies become more sophisticated, knowing how consumers perceive these risks is crucial for shaping effective marketing campaigns (Lina & Setiyanto, 2021:149).

Perceived risk is widely recognised as multidimensional, encompassing several facets that collectively influence how potential consumers weigh the pros and cons of online purchases (Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972:310). These dimensions encompass financial, psychological, performance, time, social and physical risks, each adding a distinct layer to the consumer's evaluation of potential negative outcomes (Sudibyo *et al.*, 2020:88). According to Hayes (2023) and Sudibyo *et al.* (2020:88), financial risk is the fear of losing money, while psychological risk is the worry of disappointment. Performance risk concerns products not working as expected, whereas time risk is risk associated with the inconvenience of having to return a product purchased (Chen, 2023). Social risk involves potential social disapproval, while physical risk is the fear of receiving harmful products (Von Scheve & Lange, 2023:2). These anxieties can be mitigated by organisations to increase trust and encourage online purchases (Gibreel *et al.*, 2018:158).

Numerous studies have investigated the impact of perceived risk on consumer behaviour, revealing a complex relationship that varies across different demographic and psychographic segments (Mercanti-Guérin, 2020:52; Jiang *et al.*, 2020:238; Zhang & Yu, 2020:1). These studies confirm that reducing perceived risk is crucial for enhancing consumer trust and loyalty, which are indispensable for the success of online retailers. Sudibyo *et al.* (2020:87) found that perceived risks, including financial, product performance, social, time, privacy and security risks negatively impact consumers' online purchase intentions. Similarly, Arli (2024:878) proposes that consumers' perceptions of the ethicality of retargeting online advertising moderated the relationship between their attitudes towards retargeting and their purchase intentions, with less ethical perceptions leading to lower purchase intentions. Additionally, Mulla and Narhe (2023:2771) found that factors related to retargeting, such as the use of private data, advertisement frequency and dynamic pricing, can both positively and negatively impact consumer purchase intentions, depending on how consumers perceive these practices.

As such, retargeting and remarketing help consumers discover relevant products and services, potentially leading to increased online purchases (Arli, 2024:878). However, if consumers perceive these practices as unethical or a violation of their privacy, it can negatively impact their purchase intentions (Gibreel *et al.*, 2018:158). Furthermore, even though the development of mobile devices and digital technologies has made it easier for marketers to collect and use consumer data for retargeting and remarketing purposes, it has increased consumers' concerns about the privacy and security of their individual information, which can directly impact their trust in these practices and their willingness to make online purchases (Politz, 2023).

3.5.5.1 Privacy concerns

Stone *et al.* (1983:459) consider privacy as a consumer's ability to control sensitive information. The term "privacy concerns" refers to a psychological condition of anxiety resulting from potential privacy loss (Youn & Shin, 2019:30). Privacy concerns in the context of online purchasing, particularly in South Africa, revolve around the apprehension consumers feel about how their data is collected, stored and used by online marketers and retailers (Strycharz *et al.*, 2019a:53). The rise of the internet and digital platforms has completely transformed the landscape, bringing a whole new set of privacy concerns that consumers and organisations never had to consider before (Lina & Setiyanto, 2021:150). Traditionally, privacy concerns might have centred around the security of financial transactions and the confidentiality of personal information shared in a face-to-face context (Antón *et al.*, 2010:24); however traditional privacy anxieties about physical documents and interactions have shifted to worries about digital data and online interactions (Ozcelik & Varnali 2019:1; Varnali, 2021:93). The consumer's concern about their privacy, invasion and data theft is increasing since marketers use consumer data to generate personalised remarketing and retargeting ads.

Remarketing and retargeting hinge on striking a delicate balance between personalisation and privacy (Politz, 2023). In South Africa, as more consumers embrace online shopping, their digital footprints become a rich source of data for organisations using retargeting and remarketing strategies (Makhitha & Mbedzi, 2022:106; Varnali, 2021:93). Increased awareness of data breaches and identity theft has heightened privacy anxieties among South Africans (Song *et al.*, 2019a:100819). While the progressive POPIA law offers some control, its complexity and limited public awareness create uncertainty (Desai, 2024). According to the National Law Review (2020), unclear privacy policies from local retailers and concerns about data localisation further fuel anxieties in South Africa with high cybercrime rates. Conversely, transparency from organisations about their data practices, robust data protection measures and giving consumers control over their data can significantly reduce privacy concerns (Martin *et al.*, 2020:474). Despite the potential opportunity for the growth of e-commerce in South Africa, some consumers still have privacy concerns, while others worry about product deliveries (Business Tech, 2018). This leaves organisations with a challenge to adapt their digital and marketing strategies accordingly (Varnali, 2021:93).

Several studies have consistently demonstrated a correlation between privacy concerns and online behaviour, particularly in terms of attitudes and online purchase intentions (Liang & Shiau, 2018; Lina & Setiyanto, 2021:149; Youn & Shin, 2019). Privacy concerns have a significant impact on online purchasing behaviour (Lina & Setiyanto, 2021:147). Higher privacy concerns correlate with more cautious online behaviour and reluctance to engage in online transactions (Chaudhuri

et al., 2023:467; Li *et al.*, 2020:511). These findings shape the hypothesis that addressing privacy concerns can positively influence online purchase intentions. Makhitha and Ngobeni (2021:1) found that privacy risk influences attitudes towards online shopping more than product or delivery risk.

Furthermore, while advertisements enhance consumer engagement and potentially increase purchase intentions by delivering content that aligns with individual preferences, they also raise concerns about privacy and intrusiveness (Wen & Imamizu, 2022:211). The growing intersection between consumer privacy and personalised advertising strategies, such as remarketing and retargeting, highlights the delicate balance that organisations need to navigate (Varnali, 2021:93). Although these strategies can effectively boost consumer engagement and purchase intentions, they simultaneously raise substantial concerns about privacy and, more critically, perceived intrusiveness (Niosi, 2021:67; Politz, 2023). This led to this study's examination of how intrusiveness influences consumer attitudes and behaviours within the digital marketplace.

3.5.5.2 Intrusiveness

Li *et al.* (2002:39) describe intrusiveness as the disruption of a target audience's cognitive processes. Riedel *et al.* (2024:361) suggest that advertising becomes intrusive when it interferes with a consumer's objectives within a specific medium (Yaseen *et al.*, 2023:107). This disruption has been amplified in the digital age where advertisements also interrupt and track consumers across different platforms, leveraging personal data to target them more precisely (Lin *et al.*, 2023:286; Wen & Imamizu, 2022:211). Consequently, advertising intrusiveness in the digital era is significantly shaped by the capabilities of internet technologies to track, analyse and predict consumer behaviour, leading to highly targeted advertising strategies that can feel intrusive (Riedel *et al.*, 2024:363).

A study conducted by Lee *et al.* (2022:102532) proposes a theoretical model to help understand and evaluate the trade-offs between personalisation and intrusiveness in social media marketing. The findings revealed that while personalisation had a positive impact on purchase intentions, intrusiveness had a negative effect on purchase intentions. Additionally, personalisation significantly influenced purchase intentions by way of its impact on perceived intrusiveness. Youn and Shin (2019:232) demonstrate that when consumers believe their autonomy is threatened by intrusive personalisation, they are more likely to experience psychological reactance, which leads to higher advertisement avoidance behaviours.

Aiolfi *et al.* (2021:1095) highlight that there is a delicate balance between personalisation and intrusiveness when it comes to digital marketing strategies. While personalisation boosts consumer engagement and purchase intentions, aggressive or poorly implemented

personalisation, which feels intrusive, can have the opposite effect, causing consumers to avoid advertisements completely or react negatively towards the advertisements (Pelet & Ettis, 2022).

As intrusiveness in digital marketing strategies can significantly impact consumer perceptions and behaviour, it is essential to consider the broader implications for organisations (Youn & Shin 2019:232). While the initial consumer reaction to intrusive advertisements might be negative, the long-term benefits of brand memory and engagement should not be underestimated (Politz, 2023; Yaseen *et al.*, 2023:107). Although advertisement intrusiveness is often considered undesirable, it can have a positive impact on both consumers and marketers. This is due to intrusive advertisements, with their conspicuous location and timing, often being more remembered by consumers (Niosi, 2021:67). Suarsa (2020:88) notes that although intrusiveness in location-based advertising negatively impacts purchase intentions, it significantly influences consumer attitudes towards the advertisements in question. This influence on consumer attitudes can be strategically leveraged to enhance brand recall.

Mishra and Malhotra (2021:9) highlight the delicate balance between gamification, psychological ownership and perceptions of advertisement intrusiveness. The findings suggest that when consumers feel a stronger sense of psychological ownership over a game, they tend to perceive in-game advertisements as less intrusive. As such, targeted advertisements, when relevant and valuable, can overcome initial intrusiveness and even boost consumer engagement (Abdel Monem, 2021:120). In addition, advertisements that are tailored to each user's interests and needs are more likely to be perceived as useful and valuable, despite being disruptive to the consumer experience (Lina & Setiyanto, 2021:147; R  ther *et al.*, 2023). As such,

3.5.6 Business factors

In the context of online purchase decisions, several organisational factors influence consumer behaviour and satisfaction (Clark, 2023). These factors include website design, online reviews, e-reputation and e-trust (Torkington, 2021). The underpinning theories of consumer behaviour and technology acceptance models provide a robust foundation for understanding how these factors impact user engagement and satisfaction (Zaremohzzabieh *et al.*, 2021:732). Among these factors, website design stands out as a crucial element, as it directly affects consumer experience and can significantly influence both consumer trust and purchase decisions (Aslam *et al.*, 2020:186).

3.5.6.1 Website design

A website is an online platform that consists of interconnected web pages, typically hosted on a server and accessible via the Internet (Shang & Bao, 2022:326). It serves as a digital

representation of an individual organisation providing information, services and resources to consumers. Organisations use websites for various purposes, promoting their products or services, providing information about their organisations, facilitating online transactions and engaging with customers (Snyder & Watts, 2024). Effective website design has significantly influenced the shift from traditional to online purchasing (Kingsnorth, 2022:31). Consumers now have the convenience of browsing and purchasing products or services from the comfort of their homes or on the go, making website design a critical factor in attracting and retaining customers (Smith, 2021:414). A well-designed website can enhance the user experience, build trust and ultimately influence purchase intentions (Kingsnorth, 2022:31).

Retargeting and remarketing are effective strategies for re-engaging consumers who have previously visited a website. These strategies collectively contribute to a better consumer experience, higher engagement and increased likelihood of repeat visits and purchases (Lu & Chen, 2020; Lee & Kwon, 2021). By incorporating elements of retargeting into website design, organisations can effectively remind consumers of their brand and encourage them to return to make a purchase. This is achieved by placing cookies on consumers' devices, allowing targeted advertisements to appear on other websites they visit (Kingsnorth, 2022:131).

Key design elements for online retargeting include strategically placed call-to-action buttons, personalised content and intuitive navigation that makes it easy for consumers to pick up where they left off (Kingsnorth, 2022:229). Additionally, integrating analytics tools to track consumer behaviour can enhance the precision of retargeting efforts, ensuring that the advertisements shown are relevant and timely (Darstaru, 2023).

Effective retargeting boosts user engagement and significantly increases conversion rates, making it a vital component of digital marketing strategies (Torkington, 2021). Nguyen *et al.* (2023:5) highlight that a well-designed website increases consumer confidence, which is a crucial driver of purchase intention. Espírito Santo and Trigo (2020:316) assert that a visually appealing website design not only attracts consumers but also fosters a sense of trust, which is essential for converting browsing behaviour into purchase intention. Furthermore, Ritonummi (2020) found that when a website is easy to navigate, consumers are more likely to stay engaged and progress towards completing a purchase. This finding aligns with the work of Gusti and Laksmidewi (2023:91), who illustrate that in the online travel agency sector, effective website design not only directly affects purchase intention but also strengthens trust, which in turn mediates this relationship. Similarly, the study by Aljabari *et al.* (2023:6) on Jordanian consumers underscores that well-designed websites enhance user trust and satisfaction, leading to increased electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and subsequent purchase intentions.

Studies collectively highlight the critical role of website design in shaping consumer behaviour (Aslam *et al.*, 2020:186; Lăzăroiu *et al.*, 2020:890). Focusing solely on website design allows for a detailed examination of how design elements independently drive purchase intention without conflating the influence of other factors, such as e-service quality, privacy or shopping enjoyment (Tao *et al.*, 2022:4). This approach ensures clarity in understanding the direct impact of website design while acknowledging that overlapping constructs like trust and satisfaction should be addressed in distinct sections of a broader analysis to maintain conceptual clarity and avoid dilution of findings (Hughes, 2022). A well-designed website not only enhances purchase intention but also plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions, which are often reflected in online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Lăzăroiu *et al.*, 2020:890). This connection is supported by Aljabari *et al.* (2023:6), who found that high-quality website design significantly increases consumer trust and satisfaction, leading to more positive online reviews and increased purchase intentions.

3.5.6.2 Online review attitudes and quality

Reviews are critical evaluations or assessments of products and services, traditionally shared through word-of-mouth or media, such as newspapers and magazines (Pooja & Upadhyaya, 2022:628). With the advent of the internet and digital platforms, reviews have evolved significantly, becoming a central component of e-commerce and digital marketing (Pooja & Upadhyaya, 2022:629). Online reviews are defined as evaluative information provided by consumers who make use of digital platforms to purchase products and services (Ruiz-Mafe *et al.*, 2020:466), where feedback is provided based on their experiences with the products or services they purchase on these digital platforms (Varnali, 2021:94). In a traditional context, reviews served as a primary source of information for potential consumers, heavily influencing their purchasing decisions (Segijn & Van Ooijen, 2022:208). With the shift to online commerce, the significance of reviews has amplified. Online reviews not only impact consumer trust but play a crucial role in search engine rankings and online visibility (Nadeem *et al.*, 2020:2). As consumers increasingly rely on digital feedback, organisations must adapt by actively managing and responding to online reviews (Chen *et al.*, 2022a:3).

A lack of reviews can lead to several negative outcomes for organisations (Kumar, 2023). Without consumer feedback, potential customers may feel uncertain about the quality and reliability of a product, leading to decreased trust and lower sales (Zhai *et al.*, 2022:946). Additionally, the absence of reviews can negatively impact a product's ranking on e-commerce platforms and search engines, reducing its visibility and attractiveness to prospective consumers (Gupta *et al.*, 2023:201). Conversely, bad reviews can harm an organisation's reputation and deter potential

consumers. In addition, negative feedback lowers the rating of a product or service, making it less appealing and harder to find on e-commerce platforms (Clark, 2023). Unresolved negative reviews can also indicate poor consumer service, further damaging a brand's image and reducing consumer trust (Clark, 2023; Hicklen, 2023).

Effectively managing negative online reviews is crucial for maintaining a positive organisational reputation. Organisations should respond promptly and professionally to negative feedback, addressing consumer concerns and offering solutions (Hicklen, 2023). This approach helps resolve issues and demonstrates a commitment to consumer satisfaction, potentially turning negative experiences into positive ones (Valeria, 2024). Additionally, leveraging negative reviews as constructive feedback can help organisations identify areas for improvement (Kumar, 2023).

Good reviews can significantly benefit organisations by building credibility, enhancing brand reputation and driving sales (Hicklen, 2023). Positive feedback reassures potential customers and serves as a form of social proof, encouraging these potential customers to make purchases. Moreover, favourable reviews can improve a product's ranking on e-commerce platforms, increasing its visibility and attracting more consumers (Wang *et al.*, 2023). To encourage consumers to post online reviews, organisations can implement strategies such as retargeting and remarketing. These techniques involve reaching out to consumers who have previously interacted with a product or service and reminding them to leave a review (Kolesky, 2021). Offering incentives like discounts or loyalty points can also motivate consumers to share their experiences (Kumar, 2023). Individualised follow-ups and easy-to-use review submission processes further enhance the likelihood of receiving reviews (Ozcelik & Varnali, 2019b:22).

Numerous studies highlight the relationship between online reviews and consumer purchase intentions, emphasising the influence of review content on perceived product quality and trust. Zaman *et al.* (2023) indicate that while influencer credibility significantly affects purchase intentions, consumer reviews have less influence. As such, positive reviews generally enhance product perception and sales, as demonstrated by Jha *et al.* (2023). Puspitasari and Aruan (2023) find influencer-generated reviews more effective in shaping purchase intentions compared to user-generated ones, attributing this to perceived effort and credibility. Understanding this dynamic is essential for organisations that wish to leverage online reviews to drive sales.

3.5.6.3 E-trust

Trust is a multifaceted concept studied across various fields. Traditionally, it involves being willing to be vulnerable based on positive expectations of another party's intentions or actions (Rousseau *et al.*, 1998:393; Williams & Baláž, 2021:1619). With digital technologies and online interactions, e-trust has emerged, defined as the confidence and willingness to rely on another party in an

online context (Al-Adwan *et al.*, 2020:278). E-trust is also described as "the extent to which consumers believe that an online vendor will fulfil its transactional obligations" (Gibreel *et al.*, 2018:156). Additionally, Benitez *et al.* (2023:1) describe e-trust as "the willingness of consumers to depend on online transactions based on the expectation of predictable, honest and competent behaviour".

Trust plays a crucial role in facilitating transactions, fostering cooperation and enabling the exchange of information and resources, both in traditional and online contexts (Aaron Hall, 2023). In the digital realm, trust is particularly important as it mitigates the inherent risks and uncertainties associated with online interactions, where parties often lack face-to-face contact and physical cues (Wells, 2019). In the realm of e-commerce, it has been demonstrated that consumers' intentions to engage can be predicted by their confidence in electronic media (Singh & Srivastava, 2018:357). The online environment presents a unique challenge, as trust is equally crucial in affecting consumers' willingness to engage in transactions, share personal information and recommend an organisation to others (Handoyo, 2024:1). High levels of trust can lead to several positive outcomes for organisations, including increased online sales, consumer retention and the likelihood of receiving positive reviews (Kim *et al.*, 2021). When consumers trust an organisation, they are more likely to perceive products as high quality, which enhances purchase intentions and improves consumer loyalty (Aparicio *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, trust encourages the sharing of individual information, allowing organisations to offer individualised experiences and targeted offerings to their customers (Rensburg, 2023). Trust also fosters positive word-of-mouth and recommendations, which can attract new customers and strengthen a brand's reputation (Von Sprei & Wirnsperger, 2023).

Conversely, a lack of trust can have detrimental consequences for organisations and online platforms. It can lead to decreased consumer engagement, a reduced willingness to share individual information and lower conversion rates (Shavitt & Barnes, 2022). When consumers perceive a lack of trust, they may abandon online transactions, switch to competitors or engage in negative word-of-mouth, ultimately harming an organisation's reputation and profitability (Sung *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, cultivating trust in the online environment is crucial for sustaining an organisation's success and mitigating potential risks (Ventre & Kolbe, 2020).

To build trust in the online purchase environment, organisations can employ various strategies. This may involve reaching out to consumers who have previously visited a website but did not make a purchase, using personalised advertisements to remind them of the products or services (Sherman, 2023). Another strategy is remarketing, which targets past consumers with tailored offers and messages to encourage repeat business (Darstaru, 2023). Additionally, organisations can enhance e-trust by providing transparent and accurate information, offering secure payment

options, displaying consumer reviews and engaging with consumers on social media (Diputra & Yasa, 2021:28). These measures can help establish credibility, demonstrate accountability and foster a sense of community and open communication (Meyer, 2021).

3.5.6.4 E-reputation

Reputation is traditionally defined as the beliefs or opinions held about someone or something, which has been critical for organisations that wish to influence consumer trust and loyalty (Esenyel, 2020:30). With the advent of digital technologies and the internet, reputation has evolved into what is now known as e-reputation (Brown *et al.*, 2021:567). E-reputation may be defined as the digital footprint left by the activities and interactions of individuals or organisations on the internet (Smith & Anderson 2022:345). Brown *et al.* (2021) add that e-reputation is the online public perception shaped through a conglomeration of social media, customer reviews and digital content. As such, the rise of online commerce has amplified the significance of reputation, which was traditionally built through word-of-mouth, media coverage and direct consumer interactions (Changchit & Klaus, 2020:82).

Online reviews, ratings and social media interactions have become the battleground for an organisation's reputation (Chen *et al.*, 2022a:1). It not only influences consumer trust but impacts search engine rankings, social media visibility and the purchase decisions of consumers, highlighting the importance of organisations developing a strong online reputation to ensure future success (Valeria, 2024). Without a well-established reputation, potential consumers may feel uncertain about the credibility and reliability of an organisation, resulting in decreased trust and lower engagement (Román *et al.*, 2023:2). Additionally, a lack of e-reputation can negatively impact an organisation's visibility on search engines and social media platforms, making it difficult to attract new consumers and retain existing ones (Varma *et al.*, 2020:119).

Having a strong reputation enhances consumer trust and loyalty, encouraging repeat business and positive word-of-mouth referrals. It also differentiates an organisation from its competitors, providing a competitive advantage. Moreover, a good e-reputation can improve an organisation's online visibility, attracting more traffic and potential consumers to its website and social media profiles (Aparicio *et al.*, 2021:2). Organisations can effectively manage their e-reputation by monitoring online reviews and social media mentions, promptly addressing consumer concerns and engaging positively with their target audiences (Matriadi, 2021:40). Having a bad reputation can have several negative consequences. For instance, it can deter potential consumers, reduce sales and damage an organisation's credibility (Aparicio *et al.*, 2021:4). Moreover, negative reviews and poor ratings can be particularly harmful, as they are highly visible online and can

spread quickly through social media. This can lead to a loss of trust and consumer loyalty, making it difficult for an organisation to recover its standing (Lyndon, 2021).

In the online purchase environment, building a good reputation can be effectively achieved through various strategies, such as offering incentives for positive reviews, creating high-quality content that showcases an organisation's strengths and leveraging influencer partnerships (Clark, 2024). Providing excellent consumer service, engaging with consumers on social media and encouraging positive reviews can help build and maintain a strong e-reputation (Baldwin, 2023). Consequently, the role of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is crucial in this context, as consumer reviews can significantly influence a brand's reputation (Choi, 2020:1). Behavioural retargeting, which involves providing individualised recommendations, can further enhance consumer engagement and potentially lead to purchases, although it may not always influence behavioural change (Abirami & Rajan, 2022). Integrating online and offline remarketing strategies can offer a more comprehensive approach to reputation management, ensuring better targeting (Ratchford *et al.*, 2022).

To understand the relationship between reputation and attitudes, Ahn and Back (2018:3026) explored the mediating roles of brand experience and attitudes, demonstrating that a strong brand reputation enhances consumer attitudes and experiences, which in turn positively affects behavioural intentions. Similarly, Karasik (2022:170) investigated how reputation and respect are interlinked, where a good reputation fosters positive attitudes and behaviours due to emotional and rational evaluations. A positive reputation increases trust and perceived value, which in turn enhances purchase intentions and consumer loyalty (Brown *et al.*, 2021:567). Conversely, a negative reputation can lead to distrust and reduced purchase intentions (Rehman *et al.*, 2020:218). Understanding this relationship is crucial for organisations looking to leverage their reputation to drive sales and build long-term consumer relationships (Brown *et al.*, 2021:567; Rehman *et al.*, 2020:218). This interconnection between reputation and trust becomes even more significant when considering e-trust (Benitez *et al.*, 2023:1).

3.6 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is a structure of interconnected concepts or theories that help clarify the relationships between variables or ideas, providing a coherent structure and interpreting a particular phenomenon or problem within a specific field of study (Antonenko, 2015). Numerous scholars have explored various factors influencing the purchasing behaviour of online consumers (Ha *et al.*, 2022:1545; Ndeudjeu, 2021:95; Nguyen *et al.*, 2023:3; Ruiz-Herrera *et al.*, 2023:5).

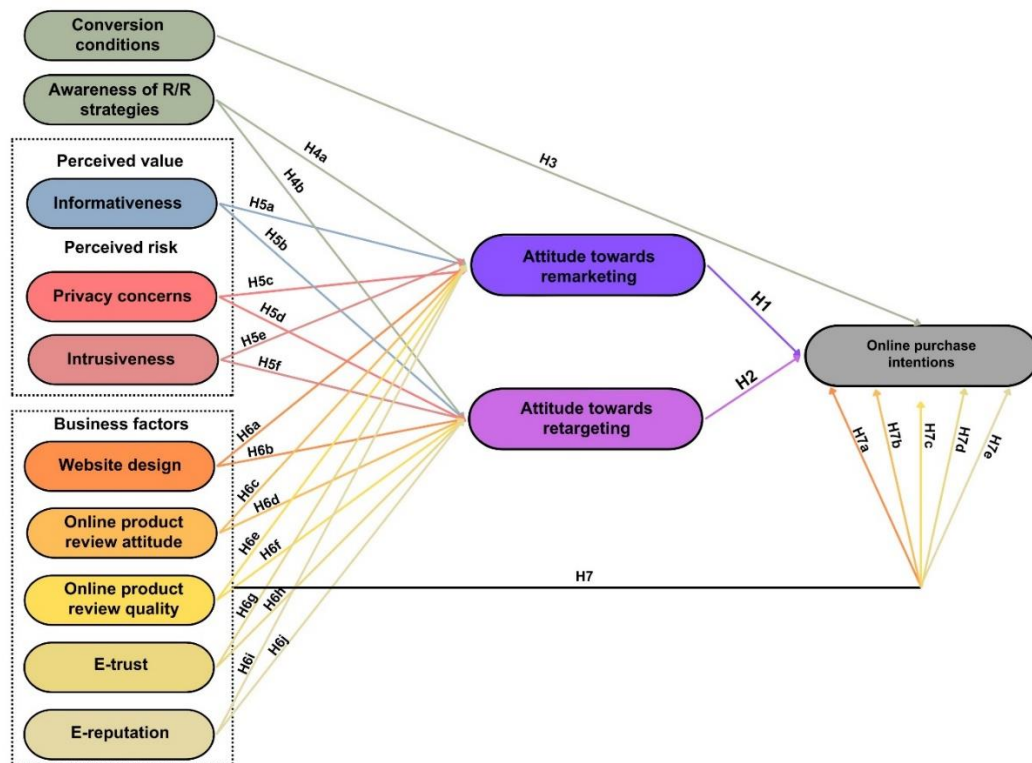


Figure 3.4: Proposed model of the factors influencing South African consumers' remarketing and retargeting attitudes and their online purchase intentions

The study's conceptual framework suggests that remarketing and retargeting impact consumers' online experiences, thereby influencing their purchasing decisions. This framework, developed through a meta-analysis and literature review, is depicted in Figure 3.4. This framework synthesises the key factors previously discussed, such as perceived value, perceived risk and various business factors, into a cohesive model that illustrates their interrelationships and collective impact on consumer attitudes and online purchase intentions. The framework is designed to provide a holistic understanding of how these elements interact to shape consumer behaviour in the digital marketplace. Specifically, it proposes that consumers' awareness of the conversion conditions associated with remarketing/retargeting strategies directly impacts their attitude towards such strategies. Additionally, the perceived value and perceived risk, determined by informativeness, intrusiveness and privacy concerns respectively also directly determine consumers' remarketing and retargeting attitudes. Business factors such as website design, online review attitude and quality, e-reputation and e-trust play a critical role in influencing consumer attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies. The model finally suggests that consumers' attitudes toward remarketing and retargeting strategies will determine their online purchase intentions. By integrating these components, the framework offers a structured

approach to analysing how positive or negative attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting ultimately drive online purchase intentions, offering valuable insights for organisations looking to optimise their online marketing strategies.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing consumer attitudes towards online purchase intentions, with a specific focus on retargeting and remarketing strategies. Through the exploration of behavioural and attitude models, this study has deepened the understanding of how various external and internal factors, ranging from social influences and psychological processes to individual motivations shape consumer behaviour in the digital marketplace. Additionally, the chapter emphasised the importance of cognitive, affective and behavioural components in forming consumer attitudes. It highlighted the critical roles of perceived value, perceived risk and business factors, such as website design and e-trust, in determining the effectiveness of these targeted marketing efforts.

The conceptual framework developed in this chapter offers a holistic approach to understanding these dynamics, stressing the need for strategic alignment between marketing strategies and consumer expectations. The insights gathered underscore the vital role of consumer attitudes in driving the success of retargeting and remarketing strategies, equipping marketers with the tools needed to create resonant campaigns that lead to higher conversion rates in a competitive online environment. The research methodology employed to empirically test the impact of these factors on consumer attitudes towards online advertisements will be detailed in Chapter 4, providing further clarity on how to effectively engage and convert online consumers.

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter included a review of the literature regarding the factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies and their online purchase intentions. Chapter 4 explains the research methodology that was used to address the primary research objective and the seven empirical objectives and test the 27 formulated hypotheses.

Malhotra (2015:28) states that marketing research serves to address a specific issue, enhance decision-making, or identify a marketing opportunity through the processes of identifying, collecting, analysing and reporting data. This aligns with Wiid and Diggines's (2013:5) definition: "the study of different procedures of solving a research problem scientifically." Furthermore, Burns *et al.* (2017:37) delineate marketing research as the "process of designing, gathering, analysing and reporting information that may be used to solve a specific marketing problem". The reference to a sequential series of steps in the marketing research process (Figure 4.1), as proposed by Burns *et al.* (2017), adds depth to the concept's description.

Chapter 4 delves into the key concepts of marketing research relevant to this study, aligning with the study's objectives and primary research issue. It details the research methodology, including the research paradigm, design, sampling plan and the procedures for data collection and analysis. The chapter wraps up with an explanation of how the research findings were reported and presented.

4.2 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is synonymous with a map for navigating the world of research since it guides researchers through a set of guiding principles: believing in objective reality (positivism), understanding subjective experiences (interpretivism), or analysing the power dynamics (critical theory) (Grix, 2018:71). According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:26), a research paradigm serves as a framework through which researchers perceive and approach the world. Moreover, a paradigm generally signifies the collective beliefs and consensus among researchers about addressing problems (Mark, 2023:35). Saunders *et al.* (2019:144) concur, defining a paradigm as a shared way of thinking within a research community or the common beliefs, values and methods across a field. These paradigms include six critical elements: ontology, epistemology, theoretical perspectives, methodology, method and sources (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:145).

Ontology concerns the nature of reality and prompts researchers to ask questions such as "What is the nature of reality?" and "What is the nature of the phenomenon under study?" (Kivunja &

Kuyini, 2017:27). Epistemology, on the other hand, pertains to how researchers gain knowledge about reality (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:37). It examines the assumptions and beliefs regarding the nature of knowledge, leading researchers to inquire about "How do we come to know the world?" and "What is the relationship between the researcher and the known?" (Hitchcock & Onwuegbuzie, 2022:55). Theoretical perspectives inform research questions and guide the selection of methodology (Osborne, 2016:90), while methodology dictates how researchers access and report their findings about reality (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:38). Method refers to the specific research methods employed, such as questionnaires or interviews (Osborne, 2016:90).

In qualitative and quantitative research, scholars are encouraged to consider paradigms like positivism and post-positivism (Blumberg *et al.*, 2011:16; Lincoln *et al.*, 2011:117; Malhotra, 2017:26). Post-positivism encompasses interpretivism and critical theory as sub-paradigms, while realism seeks to bridge the gap between positivism and post-positivism (Perri & Bellamy, 2012:60; Vosloo, 2014:301; Grix, 2018:71). Positivism asserts that the world can be understood through scientific inquiry and empirical evidence, viewing humans as rational beings subject to quantification through scientific methods (Crossman, 2018). In contrast, post-positivism acknowledges that understanding cannot always be achieved solely through quantitative means, recognising the diversity of perspectives and disciplines needed to explain human behaviour (Gratton & Jones, 2010:26-27; Malhotra, 2017:28; Prayag, 2023:63). Realism asserts that external macro-factors beyond human control influence subjective beliefs and behaviours (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:114; Saunders *et al.*, 2019:144).

Accordingly, this study employed quantitative measures, utilising online questionnaires to mitigate potential biases such as social desirability bias, where respondents may answer in a way that they believe is more socially acceptable and interviewer bias, where the presence or influence of a researcher could affect responses. Statistical analysis was employed to adhere to both positivist and post-positivist principles. Additionally, realism was considered as the study acknowledges recommendations and limitations in Chapter 6, recognising the factors that influence consumers' attitudes towards online remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions. This research paradigm guided the subsequent marketing research process this study employed, as discussed in the following section.

4.3 Marketing research process

Organisations continuously encounter numerous decisions, both significant and minor. Utilising marketing research enhances the quality of these decisions (Hutt & Speh, 2021:334; Malhotra *et al.*, 2017:55). Marketing research is essential for managers as it furnishes them with strategic and

tactical insights into customers and markets, enabling effective decision-making in marketing endeavours (McDaniel & Gates, 2018:21). The goal of marketing research, shaped by the paradigm, is to identify the appropriate research type and techniques to achieve the set objectives. The marketing research process differs across contexts and has an intricate nature. Consequently, many research endeavours do not always follow a specific set of steps, whereas in other cases, some steps continuously overlap during the execution. Additionally, there are numerous marketing research processes (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:63; Brown *et al.*, 2014:19; Malhotra, 2017:32). This study adopted the research process outlined by Burns and Veeck (2020:40). The proposed marketing process is illustrated in Figure 4.1 and is further detailed and applied in the subsequent sections.

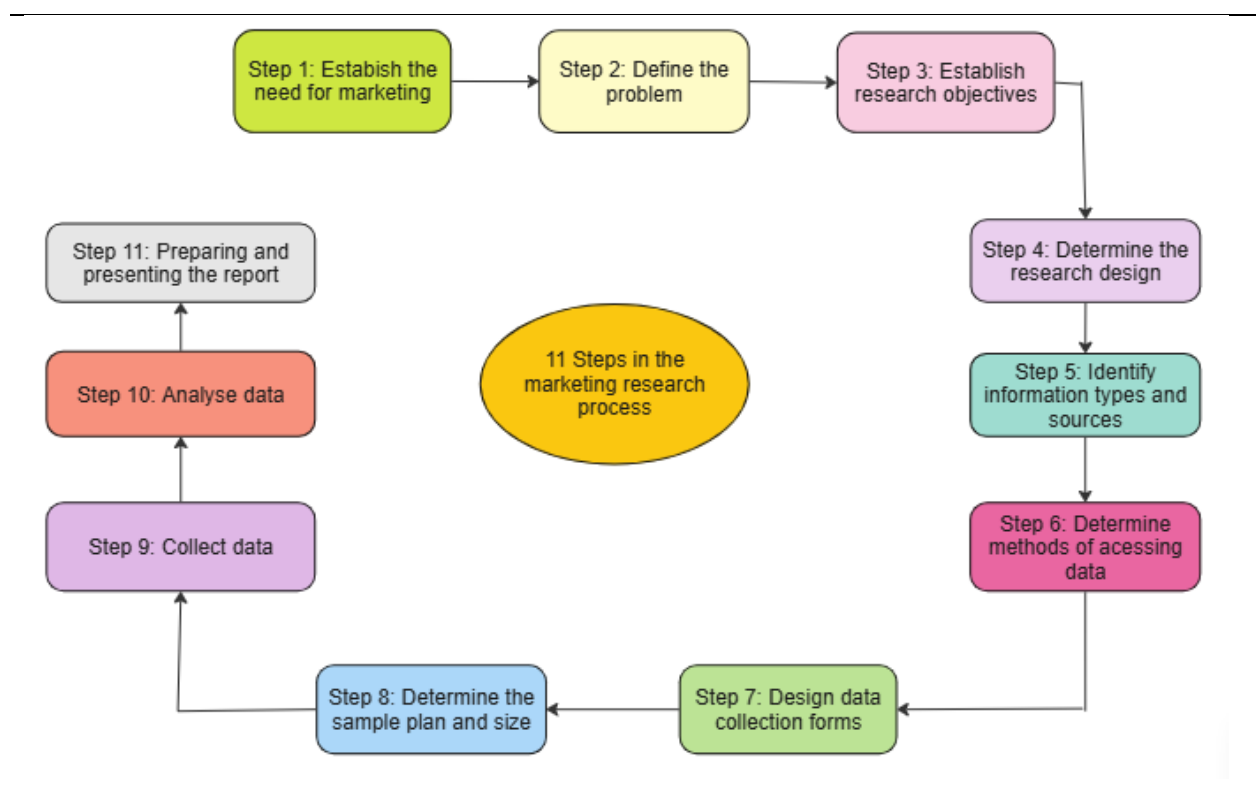


Figure 4.1: The marketing research process

Source: Burns and Veeck (2020:40) as obtained from Burns *et al.* (2017:99).

4.3.1 Establish the need for marketing research

The first step in the research process involves understanding the critical role that marketing research plays in an organisation's success. According to Babin and Zikmund (2016:19) and Hair *et al.* (2019:109), marketing research is crucial to understanding consumers, competitors and market trends, leading to better organisational decisions, improved marketing strategies and overall business success. Moreover, this process helps mitigate risks, seize opportunities and

build a strong and loyal consumer base, making it an indispensable tool in today's highly competitive business landscape. In today's marketing landscape, the need for conducting marketing research arises when organisations face decisions with insufficient information about their brands (Burns *et al.*, 2017:69)

The need for this study's investigation was detailed in Chapter 1, where the literature and research studies pertaining to remarketing and retargeting strategies, consumers' perceptions thereof and the influence of these marketing practices on consumers' online shopping behaviour are evidently scarce. Hence, the need to investigate these topics was established, subsequently leading to the research problem being defined.

4.3.2 Define the research problem

The initial and crucial step in the marketing research process for an organisation is identifying the problem (Step 2) since all subsequent steps are rendered ineffective without a thorough understanding of the issue (Burns & Veeck, 2020:43). Marketing research is appropriate only when an organisation faces decision-making scenarios with insufficient information and in such cases, a concise problem statement should be formulated to guide the research efforts (Nunan *et al.*, 2020:26). According to Burns and Veeck (2020:76), defining a problem comprises four steps, namely recognising the problem, understanding the background, determining the alternative decision and finally formulating the problem statement, which was done in Chapter 1, Section 1.1.

This study's main problem was the challenge South African retailers faced in adapting to evolving consumer preferences and technological advancements in digital advertising, particularly the implementation of remarketing and retargeting strategies. As such, this study investigated various factors, namely awareness, conversion conditions, perceived value and risk, denoted by informativeness, perceived risk and intrusiveness, online business factors denoted by website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation and the influence of these factors on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting as well as their online purchase intentions. This investigation aimed to fill the significant gap in the literature, inform the industry and progress the associated theory. This research problem, at least up to 2024, has not been addressed to the extent to which this study has. To ensure a marked contribution, this study formulated several pointed research objectives.

4.3.3 Establish research objectives

The purpose of Step 3, which involves establishing research objectives, is to furnish researchers with a precise roadmap of the essential data required for analysis and decision-making regarding

the identified problem (Burns *et al.*, 2017:71). Research objectives usually clarify the purpose of the research project and should be defined before the project begins (Feinberg *et al.*, 2013:29; Hair *et al.*, 2019:116). Ensuring the alignment of research objectives is vital for attaining meaningful outcomes (Burns & Veeck, 2020:43). Researchers can boost the probability of impactful results by consistently reviewing and adjusting their objectives throughout the research process.

As outlined in Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1, the main aim of this study was to develop and empirically test a framework addressing the factors influencing South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, as well as their online purchase intentions. This primary aim was further divided into seven empirical objectives, as detailed in Section 1.4.3.

Determine South African consumers' awareness of remarketing and retargeting strategies, their attitudes towards them and their online purchase intentions.

Determine South African consumers' perceptions of conversion conditions, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation concerning their attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions.

Determine the statistical significance of South African consumers' perceptions of conversion conditions, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation concerning their attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions.

Determine the influence of conversion conditions, awareness, attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and e-commerce business factors (website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation) on South African consumers' online purchase intentions.

Determine the influence of perceived value (informativeness), perceived risk (privacy concerns and intrusiveness) and e-commerce business factors (website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation) on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting.

Determine if South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and online purchase intentions are a 13-factor model.

Empirically test a proposed framework of the factors (awareness, conversion conditions, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation) influencing South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions.

With these objectives established, the next step was to determine which research design would be most appropriate to execute the research objectives.

4.3.4 Determine the research design

At this stage, the problem has been defined and the research objectives established. Step 4 involved selecting the most suitable research design for this study's context. Typically, the research design outlines how the research will be conducted, guiding data collection and analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2019:109; Zikmund & Babin, 2016:61). Additionally, Diggines and Wiid (2013:54-55) explain that the research design provides the overall structure for the investigation, following a planned and systematic approach to data collection, analysis and interpretation. Most literature (Malhotra, 2015:85; Babin & Zikmund, 2016:53; Burns *et al.*, 2017:72; Burns & Veeck, 2020:45) identifies three primary research designs: exploratory, causal and descriptive. Each of these designs was examined in the following sections and given their distinct purposes and methodologies, the most appropriate one for this study was selected accordingly.

4.3.4.1 Exploratory research

As the name suggests, exploratory research is a casual, informal form of research that is conducted to learn more about the research problem, acquire terms and definitions, or align research priorities (Creswell & Creswell, 2017:101; Burns & Bush, 2014:74). When other research methods are not available, exploratory research can be used to better understand consumer motivations, attitudes and behaviours (Hair *et al.*, 2013a:36; McDaniel & Gates, 2018:22). Exploratory research includes secondary research, literature reviews of existing information, focus groups, in-depth interviews, case studies and pilot studies (Clow & James, 2014:28; Hair *et al.*, 2010:36; Kumar *et al.*, 2018:80). Kumar *et al.* (2018:80) argue that the tools used in exploratory research yield more findings than other designs, making it the most productive research design. In this context, exploratory research offers valuable insights into the research problem and enhances the understanding of customer motivations, attitudes and behaviour (Hair *et al.*, 2013a:36; Malhotra, 2020:103). However, since the findings from exploratory research are preliminary, they should be validated with conclusive research (Malhotra *et al.*, 2017:56; Malhotra *et al.*, 2020:83). This means it is not suitable for hypothesis testing, as required for this study.

4.3.4.2 Causal research

The second research design, namely causal research, is used when the objective is to discover cause-and-effect relationships between certain variables (Hair *et al.*, 2013b:52; Hair *et al.*, 2018:53). This research design is best suited for addressing objectives that necessitate

understanding how independent variables influence one or more dependent variables (Kumar *et al.*, 2018:81; Zikmund & Babin, 2016:47). Causal research explores the relationships in which one or more variables impact other variables (Burns & Bush, 2014:107), typically using experimental designs to make inferences with a high level of certainty (Clark & Watson, 2019:1412). Causal research is particularly appropriate for situations where there is a need to comprehend the reasons behind market phenomena occurring as they do (McDaniel & Gates, 2018:49). The primary approach used to obtain results in causal research is through experimentation (Malhotra, 2017:88), which includes both laboratory and field experiments (Clark *et al.*, 2021:152). Although causal research designs allow researchers to establish and clarify causality among market factors (Hair *et al.*, 2019:115), they can be time-consuming and frequently involve complex and costly designs (Malhotra *et al.*, 2017:205), making them impractical for this study.

4.3.4.3 Descriptive research

As opposed to exploratory research, descriptive research is a type of conclusive research that frequently assists in presenting a precise overview of diverse market segments, offering detailed descriptions of various entities, organisations, individuals, groups and surroundings (Clark & Watson, 2019:1412). A descriptive research design entails gathering numerical data to address research questions, focusing on aspects like who, what, when, where and how (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:54; Ali *et al.*, 2019:120). Additionally, descriptive research offers a precise and valid depiction of factors pertinent to the research questions, presenting information clearly and simply (Burns *et al.*, 2017:98). The objective, when using a descriptive design, is to account for the connection between variables within a sample or a population (Ali *et al.*, 2019:120). Marketing research often employs two fundamental types of descriptive studies, with a cross-sectional design being one of them (Burns & Veeck, 2020:97). Cross-sectional design is commonly used to measure units from a sample of the population at one point in time (Burns *et al.*, 2017:103). Surveys that are created to be representative of a certain community within a predefined margin of error are known as cross-sectional (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:58; McCarthy *et al.*, 2017b:11). Brace (2018:155) states that the survey aims to forecast consumer behaviour and market conditions while outlining the characteristics of a specific target population, utilising a descriptive research design.

This study's investigation went beyond exploring research and industry phenomena and followed a formal approach to test hypotheses in addressing various empirical objectives to ultimately address the primary objective, which could not be executed in a confined laboratory experiment given the large number of variables. Further, this study's investigation aimed to answer what, who, when, where and how pertaining to South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing

and retargeting and their online purchase behaviour, thereby attesting to a population's attitudes and perceptions at one point in time, as opposed to follow-up data. As such, after careful consideration of the three research design types, this study followed a descriptive research design and a cross-sectional approach.

4.3.5 Identify information types and sources

Step 5 of the research process involves determining the types and sources of information. To collect data, various methods are available for executing the research design and the researcher must identify these information types and sources. The researcher can gather the necessary information using either primary or secondary research methods (Burns *et al.*, 2017:72). Although obtaining secondary data is very simple, acquiring primary data is far more complex, as evident by the following discussion.

4.3.5.1 Primary and secondary information

Once the research objectives are established, the researcher needs to determine the necessary type of data. Brace (2018:75) distinguishes between two types of information sources: primary and secondary. Secondary data refers to existing information within an organisation, while primary data are collected specifically to address a particular issue identified by the company (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:148; Neelankavil, 2015; Saunders *et al.*, 2019:335). Figure 4.2 summarises the different data sources.

As presented in Figure 4.2, secondary data can be categorised into two types, namely internal and external secondary data (Burns *et al.*, 2017:119; Creswell & Creswell, 2018:148). Internal secondary data refers to data collected within the organisation or by researchers associated with the organisation. This data consists of sales records, invoices and information stored in the organisation's internal database (Wiid & Diggines 2013:73). On the other hand, secondary data can also be obtained from sources outside the organisation. In the context of marketing research, this can involve information gathered from business source directories, articles, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and marketing directories (Burns *et al.*, 2017:121; Hair *et al.*, 2013a: 54). The relevance of secondary data for this study is explained under Section 4.3.6.

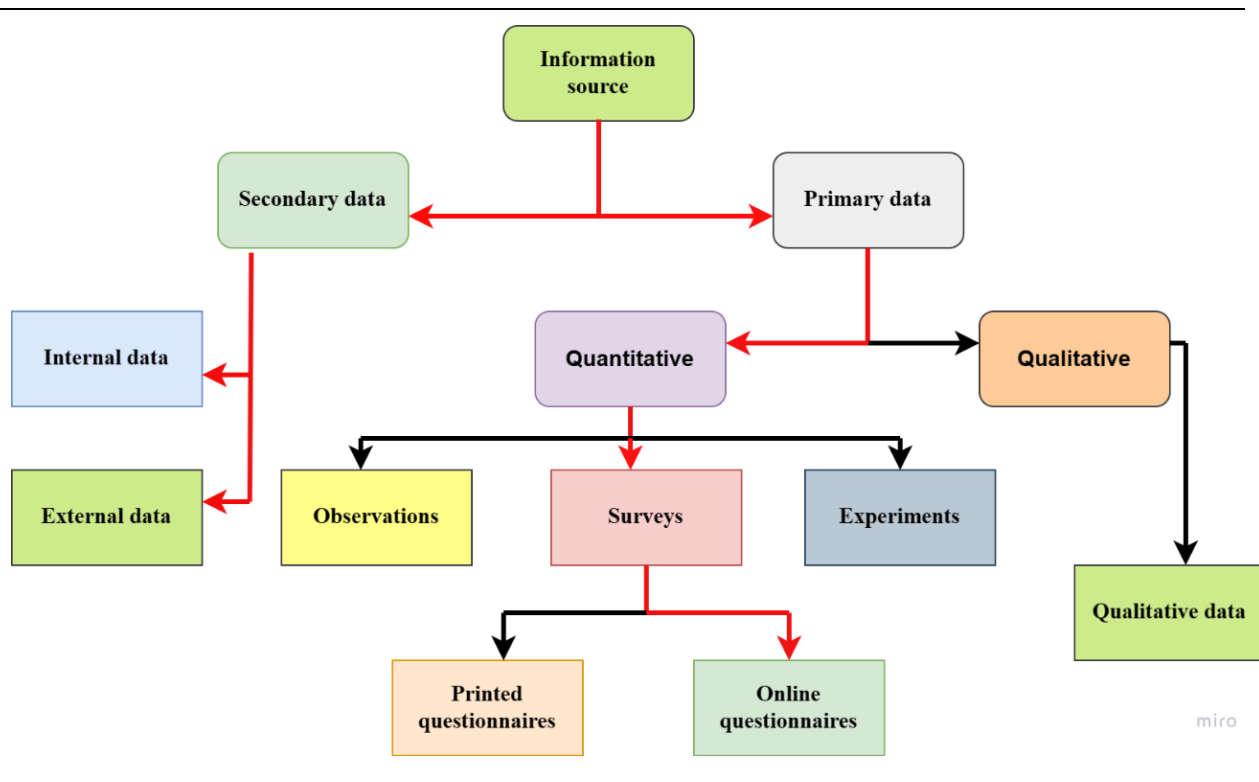


Figure 4.2: Data collection techniques

Source: Adapted from Burns *et al.* (2017:119); Creswell & Creswell (2018:148); Wiid & Diggins (2013)

4.3.5.2 Quantitative and qualitative information

Figure 4.2 further demonstrates that primary data can be categorised into two main types: quantitative and qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:116; Brown *et al.*, 2014:89; Burns *et al.*, 2017:143). Quantitative research involves data that can be easily counted, tabulated and statistically analysed (Burns *et al.*, 2017:143). It is typically conducted with many participants using structured questions with fixed response options (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:116). Quantitative data were gathered in this study to obtain numerical values that were statistically analysed to address the study's hypotheses (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:111; Creswell & Creswell, 2018:150). In contrast, qualitative research provides directional information that explores ideas, perceptions and behaviours in depth with a relatively small number of research respondents. Moreover, qualitative research provides information that can help marketers understand the big picture of how consumers perceive or experience something (Burns & Veeck, 2020:130). The key differences between qualitative and quantitative research are presented in Table 4.1. For this research study, multiple external secondary sources were utilised, including various online resources, accredited academic journals and academic textbooks.

Table 4.1: Key differences between qualitative and quantitative research

Aspect	Item codes	Items
Purpose	To gain ideas and an understanding of underlying reasons and motivations	To measure the incidence of various views and opinions in a chosen sample. To quantify data and generalise results from a sample to the population of interest.
Sample	Usually, a small number of non-representative cases.	Usually, a large sample that represents the population of interest
Data collection methods	Unstructured and open-ended.	Structured with categories provided.
Research design	Exploratory.	Descriptive and causal.
Data analysis	Data analyses are continuous and take place during data collection and non-statistical methods are used.	Data analyses take place after data is collected and statistical methods are used to analyse data.
Method	Observe participants and interpret results.	Measure respondents and test results.

Source: Silver *et al.* (2013:58); Burns and Veeck (2020:130)

Despite the time and expense involved in collecting primary data (Malhotra, 2010:132), it was necessary to gather this data to meet the study's objectives and offer new insights into the under-researched field of remarketing and retargeting strategies. Furthermore, owing to the need to collect data from a large sample, this study relied on quantitative, numerical data from a subset of the South African population.

The following sections cover exactly how and where the primary and secondary information was accessed.

4.3.6 Determining data accessing methods

Up to this point, the researcher had identified the types of information needed, which then required deciding on the methods of obtaining the relevant information as part of Step 6 in the research process. As secondary data is typically gathered before primary data (Burns *et al.*, 2017:116), this section begins with an exploration of secondary data collection, followed by an examination of primary data collection.

As illustrated in Figure 4.2 and mentioned earlier, secondary data is divided into internal and external sources (Burns *et al.*, 2017:119). Internal secondary data pertains to information derived from an organisation's databases, generally gathered through regular business operations (Burns *et al.*, 2017:119; Hair *et al.*, 2018:105). The accounting system, sales records, service logs and

product return data are examples of valuable internal secondary data (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:154). When organised and categorised effectively, this internal data holds significant value for companies, enabling analysis of product performance, evaluation of distribution efficiency and formulation of segmentation strategies (Hair *et al.*, 2018:105).

External secondary data refers to information collected by entities outside of the organisation or research setting, which is then made available for use by others (Burns *et al.*, 2017:120). External secondary data can originate from various sources, such as government agencies, research institutions, commercial databases, industry reports, or published literature (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:154). External data provides valuable insights and context for research or analysis, enabling researchers, businesses, or analysts to access a wide range of information without conducting primary data collection. External secondary data can include demographic statistics, market research reports, economic indicators and historical records, among other sources (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:154; Feinberg *et al.*, 2013:81).

After collecting and reviewing the appropriate secondary information by means of a literature review (Chapters 2 & 3), it was evident that primary data had to be collected to address the research objectives. There are various methods of collecting primary data, namely observational, experimental and survey research (Burns *et al.*, 2017:124; Malhotra *et al.*, 2020:213). These are briefly explained below:

Observational research methods consist of a researcher observing a specific aspect of human behaviour to record the data while being as objective as possible (Burns *et al.*, 2017:172). Nonetheless, this approach offers limited insights into the participant's true decision-making process, as the researcher can only infer based on the observed behaviour (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:208). Cochran (1965:234) and Malhotra *et al.* (2020:215) explain that observational studies are typically used to elucidate cause-effect relationships when controlled experiments aren't feasible. Consequently, observational studies share the goal of causal studies in predicting the causal effects between variables. However, unlike causal studies, observational studies do not utilise randomisation for assigning units to control groups (Austin, 2011:402).

Conducted in controlled environments, **experimental research** aims to test hypotheses and determine causality between variables (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:244; Malhotra *et al.*, 2020:260). Researchers assess how an independent variable influences a dependent variable, essentially proving causation (Wiid & Diggins, 2013:137). Before experimentation, decisions must be made on labelling variables, attribute levels and design type (Rose & Bliemer, 2009:590; Malhotra *et al.*, 2020:260). However, experiments are costly and time-consuming, making them less frequently utilised (Silver *et al.*, 2013:84; Hair *et al.*, 2019:115).

Survey research serves as a tool for collecting relevant information, accessing the thoughts and opinions of a target population sample (Brace, 2018:153; Zikmund & Babin, 2013:439). This method involves systematically gathering data through questionnaires or interviews, administered via online surveys, telephone interviews, or face-to-face interactions (Schutt, 2018:145). By targeting a representative sample of the population, surveys aim to generalise findings to a broader context, providing insights into behaviours, attitudes and preferences (Bridges & Fowler, 2020:89). The effectiveness of survey research hinges on careful design, including the development of clear, unbiased questions and the application of appropriate sampling techniques to ensure the collected data is reliable and valid (Frey, 2018:176). Through statistical analysis, researchers can uncover patterns, test hypotheses and generate data-driven conclusions that inform decision-making across a wide range of fields (Bridges & Fowler, 2020:89; Schutt, 2018:145).

In this study, secondary data from external sources, including several accredited academic sources, literature reviews, market research reports and historical records, among other sources, were scrutinised by the researcher with additional guidance from her promoters. The researcher mainly used the internet to access these sources with further in-person assistance from the subject librarian at the registered institution. As for the primary data, the researcher used the assistance of trained fieldworkers during the pilot study, followed by digital marketing strategies for the main collection, where information was obtained via a self-administered and electronic questionnaire, respectively. For primary data to be collected efficiently and correctly, it is crucial that the researcher understands Step 7, namely designing the data collection forms.

4.3.7 Design data collection forms

Collecting data, Step 7, forms the bedrock upon which subsequent actions and insights are built. The quality of a data collection form is pivotal in the research process, as it directly influences the quality of the data gathered (Burns *et al.*, 2017). Given the complexity of problems identified in marketing research, the collection of primary data is essential for addressing these issues effectively (Leavy, 2017:15).

A questionnaire is a highly effective tool for gathering essential primary data (Brace, 2018:182). These formal, structured documents consist of a series of questions designed to collect data from sample elements, aimed at achieving the study's objectives (Brace, 2018:198). The process of designing data collection forms is multifaceted, requiring careful planning and a clear understanding of research objectives (Žmuk, 2017:49). Each question must be crafted to elicit specific information that directly addresses the research questions. By meticulously designing the questionnaire, researchers can ensure that the primary data collected will provide valuable

insights into consumer behaviour, ultimately aiding in the development of effective marketing strategies.

Table 4.2: Measurement instrument information by construct and author

Factor	Authors	Original sources
Section C: Awareness, attitudes and online shopping purchase intentions		
Awareness of remarketing and retargeting strategies/advertisements	Song <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Hudson <i>et al.</i> (2011); Lin and Huang (2006)
Attitudes towards remarketing	Ozcelik and Varnali (2019)	Zeng <i>et al.</i> (2009)
Attitudes towards retargeting		Shimp and Kavas (1984)
Online purchase intentions	Nguyen <i>et al.</i> (2022)	Alalwan (2018)
Conversion conditions	Nishida, 2016	Nishida, 2016
Section D: Perceived value and risk of remarketing and retargeting strategies		
Informativeness	Ozcelik and Varnali (2019a)	Luo's (2002) and Ducoffe's (1995, 1996)
Privacy concerns	Strycharz <i>et al.</i> (2019a)	Baek and Morimoto (2012); Kim and Huh (2017)
Intrusiveness	Lin and Kim (2016)	Li <i>et al.</i> (2002)
Section D: Online business factors		
Website design	Rite <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> (1988)
Online review attitudes	Park <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Park <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Online review quality		
E-trust	Wen <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Gefen <i>et al.</i> (2003); Hassanein and Head (2007)
E-reputation	Aparicio <i>et al.</i> (2021); Riquelme <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Meynhardt (2009); Weiss <i>et al.</i> (1999)

The primary aim of this study was to explore and empirically validate a framework identifying the factors that influence South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, as well as their online purchase intentions. As such, the emphasis on the design and structure of the questionnaire was essential. It ensured that the collected data accurately reflected and addressed the research problem. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the scales' measurement and the sources from which the scales and statements were adapted, ensuring that the data collected are both reliable and valid. The careful presentation in Table 4.2 highlights the theoretical foundations of each construct and its adaptation to the study, demonstrating a rigorous approach to data collection.

The scales stated in Table 4.2 were vital in reflecting on the considerations for this study's question and response items.

4.3.7.1 Question and response item considerations

The choice of data collection format depends on factors such as the research objectives, the nature of the research questions, the available resources and ethical considerations (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:305). The most appropriate format to ensure the validity, reliability and relevance of data relies on some common tools such as observations, experiments and surveys. Since this study gathers quantitative data, a survey questionnaire was the most appropriate data collection form to use. Burns *et al.* (2017:216) define questionnaire design as a systematic process that involves a series of critical considerations, including the formulation of clear and unbiased questions, the selection of appropriate response formats and the careful design of the overall structure. These considerations are essential for ensuring that the questionnaire captures accurate and reliable data effectively, which is crucial for the validity of the research findings. Determining which questions to include is a crucial step in designing a questionnaire (Burns *et al.*, 2017:216). A clearly defined hypothesis serves as a valuable guide for identifying what needs to be measured in the study (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:305). By aligning the questionnaire's questions with the hypothesis, researchers can ensure that the instrument is both relevant and effective in addressing the study's objectives.

Several questions and response items were developed to gather the key data for this study. The survey aimed to collect a wide range of information, including demographic details and online shopping background information. Specific response items or statements were adapted from established, validated and reliable scales used in research studies to measure specific constructs. This approach ensured the reliability and validity of the data collected in this study. More detailed information is provided in the questionnaire layout section (Section 4.3.7.3), where Appendix A offers a comprehensive summary of the study's questions and items.

Annexure A provides a detailed breakdown of each question, the response options available and the specific constructs being measured. By providing this level of detail, the study ensured transparency and allowed a thorough understanding of the data collection process. This comprehensive approach was designed to facilitate a robust analysis of South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, ultimately contributing valuable insights to the field of marketing research.

4.3.7.2 Question response format and measurement scales

According to Brace (2018:304), within the domain of marketing research, scaling methods can be broadly categorised into two groups, namely comparative scaling and non-comparative scaling. Comparative scaling entails participants directly comparing stimulus objects (Malhotra *et al.*, 2017:338), whereas non-comparative scaling involves participants making assessments

regarding brands, products, concepts, or individuals without reference to other items or an ideal standard (Mooi *et al.*, 2018:36). Figure 4.3 presents a categorisation of the different scaling techniques.

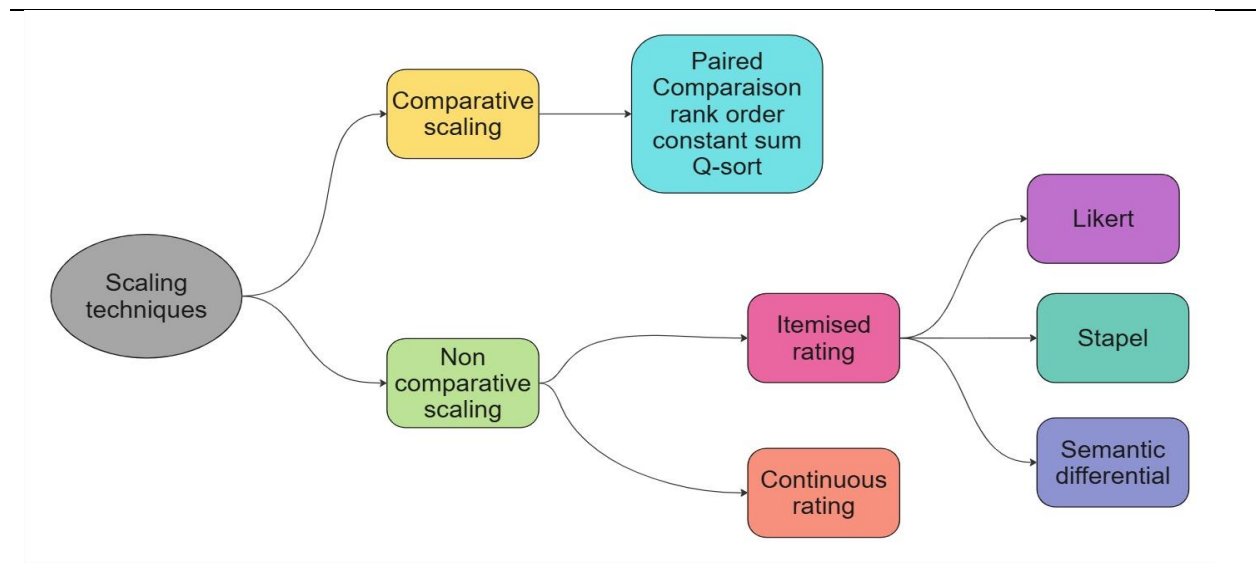


Figure 4.3: Scaling techniques

Source: Malhotra *et al.* (2017:338); Mooi *et al.* (2017:36)

As part of the data collection form design, the researcher had to decide on the question response format as well as which measurement scales would be most appropriate to capture the relevant data for the study. Consequently, this section covers considerations for the use of open-ended and close-ended responses. It includes phrasing questions with dichotomous, multiple, or scaled-response options. The latter involves choosing between comparative versus non-comparative scaling techniques, particularly opting between continuous rating and itemised rating scales. The specific choices for itemised rating scales include the Stapel, semantic-differential, or Likert scales.

Lastly, the four types of scales used to measure attributes, namely nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio scales (Brace, 2018:87; Brown *et al.*, 2014:244), had to be scrutinised and integrated accordingly.

Open-ended and close-ended responses

There are two types of response formats: open-ended (unstructured) and close-ended (structured) (Brown *et al.*, 2014:271; Burns *et al.*, 2017:207). Open-ended questions allow participants to respond in their own words (Burns *et al.*, 2017:207), providing them the freedom to answer with whatever comes to mind (Malhotra *et al.*, 2017:340). These questions are particularly useful in exploratory research designs, as the responses can help researchers

determine the range of answers to include in close-ended questions (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:307). Open-ended questions can also be divided into two categories: those seeking factual information from respondents and those that are more exploratory (Mooi *et al.*, 2017:37). Conversely, close-ended questions require participants to choose from a list of options (McDaniel & Gates, 2018:29). These questions can be further classified into dichotomous and multiple response questions (McDaniel & Gates, 2018:293) or scaled items (Brace, 2018:87; Malhotra, 2017:245).

Types of close-ended responses

Dichotomous questions offer one or two alternative responses (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:309; Malhotra, 2017:278). Sometimes, they include a neutral option like "don't know" (Denis, 2018:89). Although these questions are quick and easy to answer, they may not capture the full range of feelings on a topic (Brace, 2018:86). An example is asking respondents to indicate their gender (male/female). Multiple-choice questions ask respondents to select answers from a predefined list (Denis, 2020:435). The researcher might request that participants choose only one option or multiple ones (Brace, 2018:89; Denis, 2020:435). An example is asking respondents to indicate their ethnicity (Black/White/Asian/Coloured). Nevertheless, crafting multiple-choice questions can be time-consuming and may incur expenses, as researchers must ensure that all potential response alternatives are included (Denscombe, 2017:440).

A scaled-response question is a type of closed-ended question where the participant indicates their answer by selecting a point on a scale (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:168). The goal is to gauge the respondent's intensity of feelings towards the subject. Scaling questions are categorised into comparative and non-comparative scales (Hair *et al.*, 2019:116; Malhotra, 2017:289). Comparative scales require the respondent to express their attitudes, behaviour, or feelings about one object in relation to another (Brace, 2018:107), while non-comparative scales allow the respondent to reflect their attitudes, feelings, or behaviour towards a specific object without any reference to other objects (Brace, 2018:107).

Measurement scale types

Measurement scales are guidelines for assigning numbers to objects in a way that these numbers reflect quantities of attributes (Brown *et al.*, 2014:243). Since they directly affect response quality, researchers should choose scales carefully (Hair *et al.*, 2019:117). There are four types of scales used in research to measure attributes: nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio (Brace, 2018:87).

Nominal scales, the lowest level, assign numbers to objects or categories to identify them (Brace, 2018:75; Brown *et al.*, 2014:245; Hair *et al.*, 2013:153; Silver *et al.*, 2013:101). Demographic questions about age, gender and race use nominal scales (Brace, 2018:331; Brown *et al.*,

2014:244). *Ordinal* scales assign numbers based on order (Brace, 2018:76; Brown *et al.*, 2014:245). They indicate the level of a characteristic without showing how much more or less of the characteristic exists (Malhotra, 2017:286). Education level and income categories often use ordinal scales in marketing research (Boateng *et al.*, 2018:149; Brown *et al.*, 2014:244). *Interval* scales combine the properties of ordinal and nominal scales, indicating the size of differences between numbers (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:275; Brown *et al.*, 2014:247; Heo *et al.*, 2022:368). The *Likert* scale, which measures agreement or disagreement with statements, is a commonly used interval scale (Burns *et al.*, 2017:209). Ratio scales, the highest level, have a zero point and allow for the measurement of absolute differences between scale points, facilitating absolute comparisons between responses (Hair *et al.*, 2013a:155). The zero point signifies the absence of the characteristic being measured (Feinberg *et al.*, 2013:124).

Comparative versus non-comparative scaling

As shown in Figure 4.3, comparative scales involve directly comparing objects (Malhotra, 2017:289). The purpose of comparative scales is to have respondents express their attitudes, behaviour, or feelings towards an object in relation to another object (Hair *et al.*, 2018:175). One significant drawback of comparative scales is the potential ambiguity of the reference point, leading different respondents to use different reference points (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021:21). Examples of comparative scales include rank-order scales, constant sum scales and paired-comparison scales (Hair *et al.*, 2018:177). *Rank-order* scales enable respondents to compare objects by indicating their order of preference, while *constant sum* scales require respondents to allocate a given number of points to a set of objects so that the total equals 100 (Hair *et al.*, 2018:177; Malhotra, 2017:291). *Paired-comparison* scales present respondents with groups of characteristics, prompting them to select the most important characteristic in each group (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021:22).

Non-comparative scales allow respondents to express their attitudes, feelings, or behaviours towards a specific object without referring to another object (Hair *et al.*, 2018:177). Each object is evaluated independently and can be represented as either continuous rating scales or itemised rating scales (Malhotra, 2017:289). Continuous rating scales provide infinite categories, while itemised rating scales present respondents with a scale containing a numerical value or brief description for each category (Brace, 2018:87; DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021:22). Itemised rating scales can be further classified as single-item or multiple-item scales (Hair *et al.*, 2018:178). A single-item scale gathers data on one attribute, like age, while a multiple-item scale encompasses several statements related to the object or construct under study (Hair *et al.*, 2018:178).

The *Stapel scale* is a unipolar rating tool commonly used in survey research to measure attitudes or perceptions towards a single attribute (Burns *et al.*, 2017:145). Respondents are asked to

select a numerical value, typically ranging from -5 to +5, that best reflects their perception of an attribute's intensity (Bridges & Fowler, 2020:89). This scale is particularly valued for its simplicity and ease of use, making it highly versatile in market research applications (Malhotra, 2020:35). However, the interpretation of scores, particularly those near the neutral midpoint, can be challenging and may require careful analysis (Bridges & Fowler, 2020:90). Additionally, while the Stapel scale is efficient in gathering data, its effectiveness can vary across different cultural contexts, as perceptions of numerical ratings can differ (Brace, 2018:89; Mooi *et al.*, 2017:36). Despite these limitations, the Stapel scale remains a popular choice for researchers seeking a straightforward method to assess specific attributes (Heo *et al.*, 2022:368).

Likert scales, a popular type of multi-item scale, were developed by Rensis Likert in 1932 to measure attitudes and have been widely adopted since then (Heo *et al.*, 2022:369; Edmondson *et al.*, 2012:74; Jebb *et al.*, 2021:2). They involve asking respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements related to an issue or object (Brown *et al.*, 2014:251; Taherdoost, 2019:2). Though originally a five-point scale, many researchers now use a seven-point scale (Heo *et al.*, 2022:369). Likert-type scales are advantageous in questionnaires because they allow respondents to express the intensity of their agreement or disagreement (Brace, 2018:87; Mitchell & Jolley, 2013:298). Additionally, they generate interval data, enabling robust statistical analyses not possible with dichotomous scales (Jebb *et al.*, 2021:2; Mitchell & Jolley, 2013:298).

Another type of multi-item scale is the *semantic differential scale* (Heo *et al.*, 2022:369). The semantic differential scale includes a series of bipolar adjectives (extreme opposites) for the different properties of the object being investigated and the respondents indicate their feelings about each property along a continuum (Burns *et al.*, 2017:210; Brown *et al.*, 2014:251). The opposite words or phrases are positioned at the endpoints of the continuum with five to seven separators between each point (Burns *et al.*, 2017:210). This type of scale enables researchers to plot a profile of the brand or company image under investigation (Burns *et al.*, 2017:210).

The data collection form in this study predominantly used close-ended questions. Age was one open-ended question, requiring respondents to volunteer their exact age and instances where multi-response or rank-order questions had "other" for additional information not considered as available responses. Moreover, this study's survey used a combination of dichotomous, multi-response and scaled-response items. The types of scales used included nominal (age, gender, etc), ordinal (monthly income), itemised (Likert-scaled items) and also a rank order scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). This study employed non-comparative scales, particularly multi-item rating scales using a six-point Likert scale. Burns *et al.* (2017:215) advised that a Likert scale, especially a five-point agreement/disagreement scale, is ideal for capturing respondents' opinions

on a particular construct. Denscombe (2017:440), who compared the psychometric properties and normality of four-, five-, six- and eleven-point Likert scales, found no significant differences in mean scores, standard deviation, item-to-item correlation, reliability, exploratory factor analysis, or factor loadings among these scales. Consequently, a six-point Likert scale was chosen for this study to prevent neutral responses. This scale, labelled from strongly disagree to strongly agree, was chosen to ensure a clear and structured response format. The responses obtained from the Likert scale presented ordinal data, which will be then statistically processed to produce interval data.

4.3.7.3 Questionnaire layout

By meticulously designing the questionnaire, researchers can ensure that the primary data collected provides valuable insights into consumer behaviour, ultimately aiding in the development of effective marketing strategies. The questionnaire's flow pertains to the order of questions employed within it (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:320). The questions should advance from broad to more detailed information, including demographic data, to craft a questionnaire that is both effective and efficient (Chyung *et al.*, 2017:19). Furthermore, the questionnaire's presentation must be tidy and appealing, with clear instructions provided (Babin & Zikmund, 2016: 321).

Chyung *et al.* (2017:15) emphasise the importance of questionnaire design and layout, as they significantly influence the results. A questionnaire has several objectives: ensuring questions are understandable to participants, motivating participants to complete them and minimising response errors (Alsheikh & Sobihah, 2019:279; Malhotra, 2017:335). It should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete (McDaniel & Gates, 2018:122). The questionnaire for this study was created using Google Forms to meet the empirical objectives outlined in Chapter 1 (Section 1.4.2). Google Forms is user-friendly, allows for creating multiple surveys simultaneously, is mobile-friendly, automatically captures data into an Excel spreadsheet and offers a variety of question types (Wolber, 2012). The questionnaire used in this study is detailed in Annexure A and includes several key sections, as discussed below:

Cover page

The cover pages aimed to inform the respondent about the nature of the questionnaire, clearly outlining who was conducting the survey and how the respondents were selected to participate (Alsheikh & Sobihah, 2019:279; Burns *et al.*, 2017:223; Hair *et al.*, 2013:194). In this study, a comprehensive introduction was provided on the cover page, which included the objective of the study and crucial details regarding the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents and the handling of the results. Additionally, the introduction specified the estimated time required to

complete the questionnaire and provided the researcher's and promoters' contact information for any inquiries. Furthermore, screening questions were integrated into this cover page, which was essential as they helped identify respondents who meet the necessary criteria for participation and exclude those who do not (Burns *et al.*, 2017:223; Hair *et al.*, 2013:194). This study had four screening questions that aligned with the inclusion criteria specified in Section 4.3.8.2. The first question aimed to confirm whether the respondent currently resides in South Africa, as the study specifically focuses on individuals living in the country during the survey period. The second question was designed to determine the respondent's age group, ensuring that individuals under 19 or over 58 (born between 1966 and 2005) were excluded from participating in the study. Respondents who did not meet these criteria were automatically redirected to a 'Thank you' message, thereby maintaining the integrity of the study's sample. By incorporating these elements into the cover page, the questionnaire was structured to ensure that only qualified respondents participated, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the study's findings.

Section A: Demographic information

Section A comprised five questions to obtain specific demographical information, presented in Annexure A. To obtain more insight into the demographic information, the respondents were asked to indicate their province of residence, gender, age at last birthday, preferred language and gross monthly income (income before tax deductions).

Section B: Online shopping background information

Section B consisted of seven questions that related to the sample's online shopping background information. The respondents were requested to indicate their top three preferred online shopping sites, how often they browse and purchase online, their top five preferred online shopping categories and whether they used their mobile and email to sign up for online shopping profiles/accounts, with the last question requiring them to rank their top three most used social and digital media platforms.

Section C: Awareness, attitudes and online shopping purchase intentions

The third section was employed to obtain information pertaining to respondents' awareness, attitudes towards remarketing/retargeting and their online purchase intentions. This section comprised five scales, of which conversion conditions formed part, through a total of 19 statements.

Section D: Factors influencing attitudes towards remarketing/retargeting

This section contained two distinguishing sections and lines of inquiry, namely perceived value and risk of remarketing and retargeting, as well as online business factors. The first section comprised three scales to measure perceived risk and value, namely informativeness, privacy

concerns and intrusiveness, with a total of 14 statements. The online business factors were investigated in relation to their importance in consumers' decision to make online purchases and comprised 25 statements across five distinct scales, namely website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation.

4.3.8 Determine the sample plan and size

The subsequent step in the research process, Step 8, involved establishing the sample plan and size, known collectively as the sampling strategy. Sampling involves collecting information from a subset of a larger group or population, then making inferences about the larger population from this sample (Silver *et al.*, 2013:152).

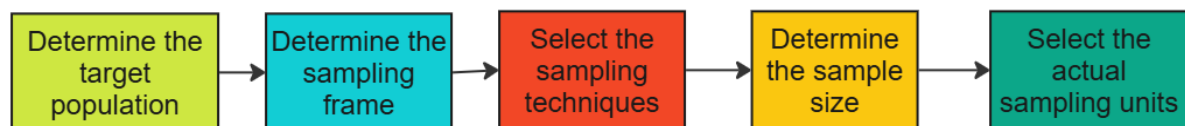


Figure 4.4: Steps in the sample plan

Source: Zikmund and Babin (2016:340)

Based on the work of Zikmund and Babin (2016:340), this study followed a five-step process to determine the sample, as illustrated in Figure 4.4 and detailed in the following sections.

4.3.8.1 Determine the target population

A research population is described by Diggines and Wiid (2013:186) and Clark and Watson (2019:1412) as the total group of people from whom information is needed. O'Leary (2010:162), alongside McDaniel and Gates (2018:290), describes a population as the entire group of interest to a researcher. This term encompasses all cases being studied, including objects, people and events (Martínez-Mesa *et al.*, 2016:326). Kumar (2018:80) further clarifies that a population (N) is the entire set from which a sample (n) is drawn for analysis and decision-making. This study targeted South African consumers born between 1966 and 2005, which in 2024 meant they should have been aged 19 to 58 years, had experience with online shopping and were officially registered with social media accounts on Facebook, LinkedIn or WhatsApp.

Table 4.3: The study's target population

Element	South African consumers from the general population between the ages of 19 and 58 with online shopping experience w

Sample unit	Social media sites, namely Facebook, LinkedIn or WhatsApp, frequented by South African consumers
Extent	South Africa
Time	January to May 2024

4.3.8.2 Sampling frame and method

The sample frame of a study consists of a list of the population elements or units (Burns *et al.*, 2017:73). It outlines the criteria for including or excluding units from the population, helping ensure that the sample is representative and relevant to the research objectives (Denscombe, 2017:33). The sample frame is the main source of sample units of the population where both the sample and sample unit exist (Burns *et al.*, 2017:239). However, this study did not access a rigid sample frame; instead, it targeted the general South African population on a non-probability basis, using a purposive sample.

At the time of data collection, the total population of South Africa was approximately 63.2 million (Stats SA, 2024). Out of this, more than three-quarters adhered to the age requirement, being born between 1966 and 2005. By focusing on this segment and considering the inclusion criteria, the study aimed to gather relevant data that reflects the attitudes and behaviours of South African consumers towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions. This approach was deemed appropriate given the study's objectives and the nature of the target population. Utilising a non-probability purposive sample allowed the researchers to focus on individuals most likely to provide valuable insights. This strategy was essential for addressing the research questions effectively, despite not having a rigid sample frame.

The sampling method, on the other hand, should align with the research design, which in this study aims to collect quantitative data. Thus, to collect large volumes of data, the sampling procedure involves the identification of appropriate recruitment portals that align with the nature of this study. Sampling is described by Burns *et al.* (2017:253) as the process of gathering data from a smaller subset of a larger population as the selection of some portion of a total or aggregate based on which a judgment or conclusion is made. Sharma (2017:750) asserts that sampling should accurately reflect the true characteristics of the entire population. It is used to examine the larger group's traits, reduce costs, save time and avoid the hassle of scheduling appointments with the whole population (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020:180). Sampling methods are categorised into probability and non-probability samples (Burns *et al.*, 2017:241). Figure 4.5 illustrates the two sampling categories and the specific sampling methods within each category, which will be further explored in the following sections.

Non-probability sampling is typically used when large-scale surveys are needed, or when it is impossible to obtain a comprehensive list of individuals to survey (Burns *et al.*, 2017:241). The

four main types of non-probability sampling techniques are convenience, snowball, judgment and quota sampling.

Convenience sampling involves selecting participants based on their availability and accessibility. This method is driven by convenience, where the researcher selects respondents who are easiest to reach (Sharma, 2017:750) and is the most cost-effective and least time-consuming sampling method, requiring minimal planning (Malhotra, 2020:275). *Snowball sampling* is employed when initial participants from a specific subpopulation are identified and then asked to refer additional members who qualify to participate in the study to the researcher (Demir, 2022:397). *Judgment sampling* involves selecting a sample based on the researcher's expertise and the study's objectives, as well as knowledge of the population and its characteristics (Rahman, 2023:207). According to Patten and Newhart (2017), in judgment sampling, the researcher uses their discretion to choose a sample that is intended to be representative. *Quota sampling* requires the researcher to divide the target population into subgroups and then select a specific quota of participants from each subgroup (Buelens *et al.*, 2018:322).

Conversely, probability sampling involves randomly selecting participants, ensuring each element in the sampling frame has a known, non-zero chance of being chosen (Burns *et al.*, 2017:241). The four primary types are simple random, stratified, cluster and systematic sampling. Simple random sampling gives every population member an equal chance of selection (Buelens *et al.*, 2018:322). Stratified sampling splits the population into mutually exclusive subgroups, from which a simple random sample is taken for each group (Sharma, 2017:750). Cluster sampling divides the population into clusters of varying sizes and selects entire clusters as sampling units (Lehdonvirta *et al.*, 2021:135). Systematic sampling starts with a random point and includes every *n*th element from that point onward (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020:223).

First, the procedure followed in this study included targeting adult South African consumers with online shopping experiences with officially registered social media accounts. Three appropriate social media platforms to reach the intended sample were selected, namely WhatsApp, Facebook and LinkedIn from the 15 most frequented social media sites in South Africa. The three selected sites were selected from options including Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Pinterest, Telegram, Snapchat, Skype, Reddit, iMessage, Tumblr and Discord (Statista, 2023a).

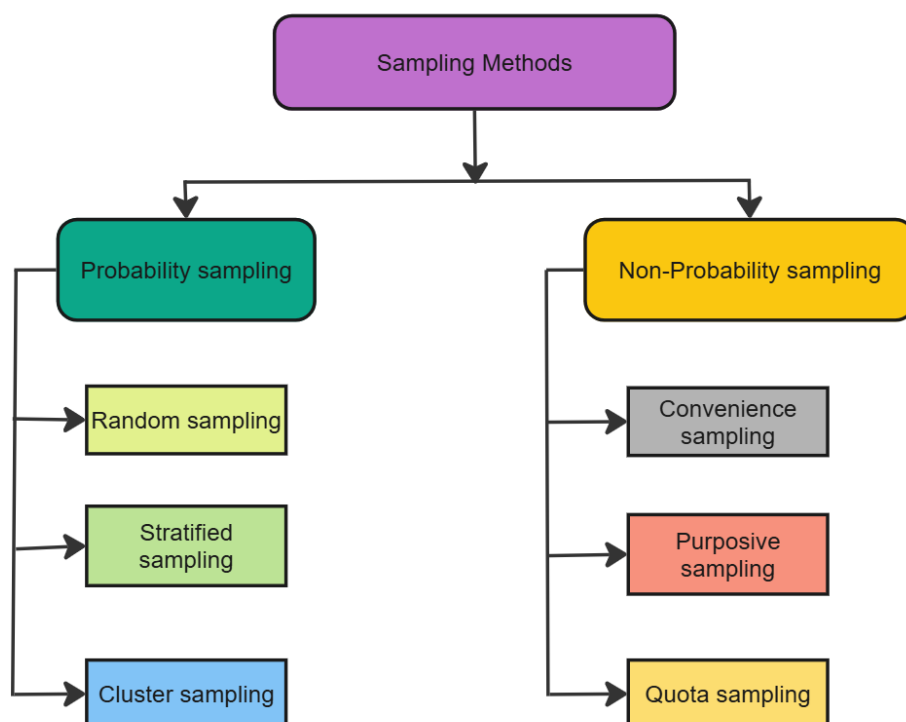


Figure 4.5: Sampling methods

Source: Burns *et al.* (2017:241); Zikmund and Babin (2016:340)

Justifying the selection of WhatsApp, Facebook and LinkedIn as the three recruitment portals is that, in 2021, 95 percent of Internet users in South Africa used WhatsApp, thereby concluding that it was the most popular social media platform. In addition, the potential South African audience on Facebook that could be targeted with advertisements totalled 24.2 million (Statista, 2023e). In addition, in 2022, an estimated 10.2 million South African users accessed LinkedIn monthly (Statista, 2023b). Furthermore, these three social media platforms are the easiest to distribute questionnaire information and links to the target sample as opposed to the other discarded social media platforms. The rationale for this statement is elaborated under the discussion concerning data collection (Section 4.3.9.2).

According to Hair *et al.* (2018:380), purposive sampling, which was used in this study, entails “selecting sample members to study because they possess attributes important to understanding the research topic.” As such, in this study, data were only collected from a non-probability purposive sample, which comprised South African consumers aged 19 to 58 years.

The inclusion criteria justifying a purposive sampling technique are outlined below:

Respondents to live in South Africa

Respondents must be born between 1966 and 2005

Respondents must have had an online shopping experience

Respondents must have had an officially registered social media account, be it on WhatsApp, Facebook or LinkedIn.

This study used snowball sampling to achieve a higher response rate. In this method, the researcher randomly selects an initial group of participants who then identify other potential participants within the target population (Clark & Watson, 2019:1412). The researcher narrowed the population to a purposive sample. This sample was then asked to distribute the recruitment material and survey link to eligible members in their network through posts on Facebook and LinkedIn. They either shared this on the two respected sites or were encouraged to use WhatsApp. The researcher was not involved whatsoever in distributing the questionnaire to their immediate network to avoid potential sample and response bias. The snowball effect relied on the cooperation of the primary target sample. Thus, the sampling methods relevant to this study included non-probability, purposive and snowball sampling.

4.3.8.3 Sample size

A very important consideration of the sampling strategy is the size of the sample to be investigated, which refers to the number of elements to be included in the study (Malhotra, 2017:374). McCarthy *et al.* (2017a:8) note that increasing the sample size reduces sampling error, though it also raises costs and response time. Researchers must weigh these practical considerations carefully. A sample size of 450 South African consumers was appropriate in this study for three reasons, namely the number of items in the questionnaire, the planned statistical procedures to be used to analyse the data and as supported by prior relevant research.

The first and second reasons are based on the 5-to-1 principle, which requires a minimum of 290 examples (Memon *et al.*, 2020:5). This number was determined to support each response statement with an adequate amount of data, adhering to the 5-to-1 ratio recommended for structural equation modelling (SEM). By targeting this range of responses, the study ensures that it not only meets but exceeds the minimum criteria needed for SEM, which requires five responses per statement. Specifically, with 58 items to be analysed, the minimum requirement would be 290 cases (58 items multiplied by 5 responses per item).

By aiming for 450 valid responses, the study allows for greater robustness, accounting for potential incomplete or unusable responses and thereby enhancing the accuracy and meaningfulness of the results derived from SEM. This approach ensures the data's integrity and the study's overall reliability. The third reason is that 450 responses align with prior studies, such as Arya *et al.* (2019:158) who used 421 respondents and Chawla and Kumar (2022:589) who targeted 432 subjects.

4.3.9 Data collection method

Once the sample plan for the study is formalised, data collection can begin (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:69). Burns and Veeck (2020:175) highlight that data collection combines traditional, low-technology methods with modern, high-technology approaches. This can involve face-to-face interviews, telephone calls, or surveys conducted in person or digitally (Burns *et al.*, 2017:290). Next, the data collection for this study will be discussed, covering the pilot testing procedure, the main data collection and the associated ethical considerations.

4.3.9.1 Pre-testing and pilot testing of the questionnaire

Pre-testing and pilot studies are crucial in survey research to refine measures and minimise the risk of defects in the main study (Zikmund & Babin, 2016:54). Pre-testing, also known as a pilot study, involves conducting a small-scale research project in the same manner as the larger study, but with a smaller and less structured sample size (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:64; Malhotra, 2017:74). These pilot studies help refine measures and reduce the likelihood of flaws in the large-scale study that could impact the data collected (Babin & Zikmund, 2016:64).

In this study, the piloting process, specifically pretesting, involved distributing the information and questionnaire link to five academics in the field of Marketing Management to ensure face and content validity and was followed by a pilot study. Clow and James (2014:28) explain that a small, representative group of 20 to 30 participants, excluded from the main study, was used to complete the pilot questionnaire. The pilot study employed a mall-intercept-type approach and the researcher assisted by trained fieldworkers targeted people with a self-administered questionnaire in a public area outside the boundaries of various major shopping centres in North-West province and Gauteng. This method does not conform to a mall-survey approach according to the traditional definition and since potential respondents were only approached outside the boundaries of the immediate shopping centres, thus public areas, explicit permission from the mall managers was not deemed necessary.

Furthermore, since this process aims to establish the reliability and validity of the instrument and provide an initial report on a representative sample, the same screening questions were applied and the cases that did not conform were discarded. Thus, pilot questionnaires were distributed until a viable number of 30 inclusive questionnaires were returned (n=52 as discussed in Section 5.2). The researcher and fieldworkers did not coerce any individual to participate and survey completion occurred voluntarily after the possible respondents had been informed about the information stated on the cover page, including informed consent, the nature and purpose, time of completion, anonymity and how the data were to be reported. The complete pilot testing procedure and results are reported in Section 5.2.

4.3.9.2 Questionnaire administration

Following the pre- and pilot testing of the questionnaire, the final instrument was administered to obtain the 450 intended cases, according to the sampling plan. That is, once the questionnaire's reliability and validity had been established and the necessary corrections made, the researcher constructed the Google Form containing the vital information about the survey and its link. The form was then shared on the recruitment portals, namely Facebook and LinkedIn, with the intended snowballing to WhatsApp for the main data collection.

On the two former platforms, the researcher, under the supervision and guidance of her promoters, had established dedicated research-based Facebook and LinkedIn profiles and dedicated pages. On these pages, which conformed to the specifications set out by the University's Corporate Relations and Marketing (CRM) department, a dedicated recruitment post was created with a detailed explanation of the study description. This post emphasised that participation was voluntary and that no personal information was gathered, thereby ensuring anonymity and encouraging potential respondents. The link to the Google Forms survey was integrated into this post and as part of the recruitment message, respondents were encouraged to share the information with their social and professional networks on WhatsApp, thereby creating a snowball effect to ensure a higher response rate. Once the post was drafted and approved by the promoters, CRM and after receiving ethical clearance from EMS-REC, Facebook and LinkedIn paid advertisements from the researcher's dedicated research-based pages were executed to distribute the post nationwide. The researcher was responsible for the costs. This process mitigated the potential issues associated with obtaining permission from specific groups/pages on the platforms to distribute the link, thereby saving time.

Given that this study aimed to use a computer-administered, online questionnaire, the responses were captured and accessible immediately after the benchmark of 450 cases was reached. Since the Google Forms platform had been used, the responses were automatically saved and an Excel spreadsheet was generated. As soon as the collection period lapsed (January to May 2024), the responses to the questionnaire were disabled. Thereafter, the data were extracted from the Google platform and stored on an approved, encrypted cloud storage solution, namely Microsoft OneDrive, thereby ensuring the safekeeping of the data. The form and data were drafted from the primary promoter's account since this account was protected by the institution's firewall. As respondents completed the online questionnaire the responses were accessible to the researcher and promoters immediately.

4.3.9.3 Ethical considerations

Marshall and Rossman (2011) assert that ethical considerations extend beyond informed consent and ensuring respondent anonymity. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2014), ethical issues in research can be categorised into four areas: protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy and honesty with professional colleagues. This demands that researchers remain emotionally resilient and continuously self-evaluate. In conducting this study, ethical standards of academic research were followed, which included obtaining clearance from the North-West University according to its research policy and submitting the proposal and questionnaire to the relevant ethics committee (EMS-REC).

Participants in the pilot sample were not coerced to participate in any way. The recruitment post on Facebook and LinkedIn contained all the necessary information from the cover page in summary form, such as voluntary participation, anonymity and the protection of personal information (PoPI Act), although no personal information was gathered, the time required for the completion was included, how the data would be reported and stored and how and where it would be presented. In instances where agreeing respondents shared the survey information with their network via the snowball sampling approach, the researcher still had no access or knowledge of who exactly shared the study's recruitment material. As such, there was minimal risk in this regard. The researcher was not involved with the snowball sample, such as distributing the information to their personal network as this could have created ethical concerns related to sampling and possible response bias. Lastly, the researcher did not and will not receive any form of funding, rewards or incentives from any institution external to the university; therefore, such data were not applied and will not be associated with any organisation. Thus, the research was carried out without any commercial or financial ties that could be seen as a potential conflict of interest.

4.3.10 Data analysis procedure

The data analysis procedure followed in this study comprised a preliminary data analysis, followed by the execution of specific statistical techniques, as discussed in the succeeding sections.

4.3.10.1 Preliminary data analysis

Data analysis involves interpreting data to derive conclusions that reflect the initial ideas, interests and theories behind the research (Babbie, 2013:416; Kumar, 2019:589). After completing fieldwork and data collection, the data must be prepared and analysed to extract meaning (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:350). This involves coding the data, associating identification codes or values with possible responses, either concurrently with or after capturing the data into a

spreadsheet (Brown *et al.*, 2014:353; Burns *et al.*, 2017:306). For this study, data collection was carried out using online questionnaires. Once the required threshold was reached and data collection was finished, the final data file was prepped for analysis (Burns *et al.*, 2017:306). Bradley (2013:313-315) states that quantitative data analysis involves editing, coding, capturing and tabulating the data.

Editing ensures that the questionnaire is consistent, properly completed and free from response errors (Zikmund & Babin, 2016:64). This step guarantees that the answers are complete, accurate and ready for further processing (Bradley, 2013:313). Experts suggest repeating the editing process to confirm viability before capturing the data (McDaniel & Gates, 2018:384). For this study, all questions were thoroughly checked for viability.

Data coding can either be integrated during the creation of data files or performed by the researcher afterwards (Burns *et al.*, 2017:306). The goal of coding is to develop theories that are conceptually sound, empirically grounded and consistently themed (Bradley, 2013:314). The questionnaire used in this study had predetermined codes per question to simplify data capturing and cross-referencing. However, the questions with “other” as a response required additional post-collection coding. The codes align with the information stated in Table 5.3.

Tabulation involves recording coded data electronically (Malhotra, 2020:459). It includes sorting data into various groupings and counting the number of cases in each group (Kumar, 2018:81). The specific process used in this study is detailed in Section 5.4.3.

The last part of preliminary data analysis is ensuring representative data and this requires removing outliers, which is the process whereby responses that fall outside of the normalised distribution of the data are removed before conducting statistical analysis of data supposed to represent a specific population. This research study made use of a Mahalanobis distance test as outlier removal occurs based on the statistical probability that the cases were, in fact, significant outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Mahalanobis distance is an effective multivariate distance metric that measures the distance between a point (vector) and a distribution. The Mahalanobis distance (MD) is the distance between two points in multivariate space (Varmuza & Filzmoser, 2016:46). The Mahalanobis distance is primarily used to identify multivariate outliers, which highlight unusual combinations of multiple variables. The Mahalanobis distance between two objects is defined (Varmuza & Filzmoser, 2016:46) as:

$$d(\text{Mahalanobis}) = [(x_B - x_A)^T \cdot C^{-1} \cdot (x_B - x_A)]^{0.5}$$

Where: x_A and x_B are a pair of objects and C is the sample covariance matrix.

This study's dataset was subject to a Mahalanobis distance test as part of the data-cleaning procedure and several outliers were removed. The data cleaning process is covered under Section 5.4.2.

4.3.10.2 Statistical data analysis techniques

Once the data have been collected, captured, edited and coded, numerous statistical methods can be applied to gain deeper insights into the responses (Hair *et al.*, 2018:268).

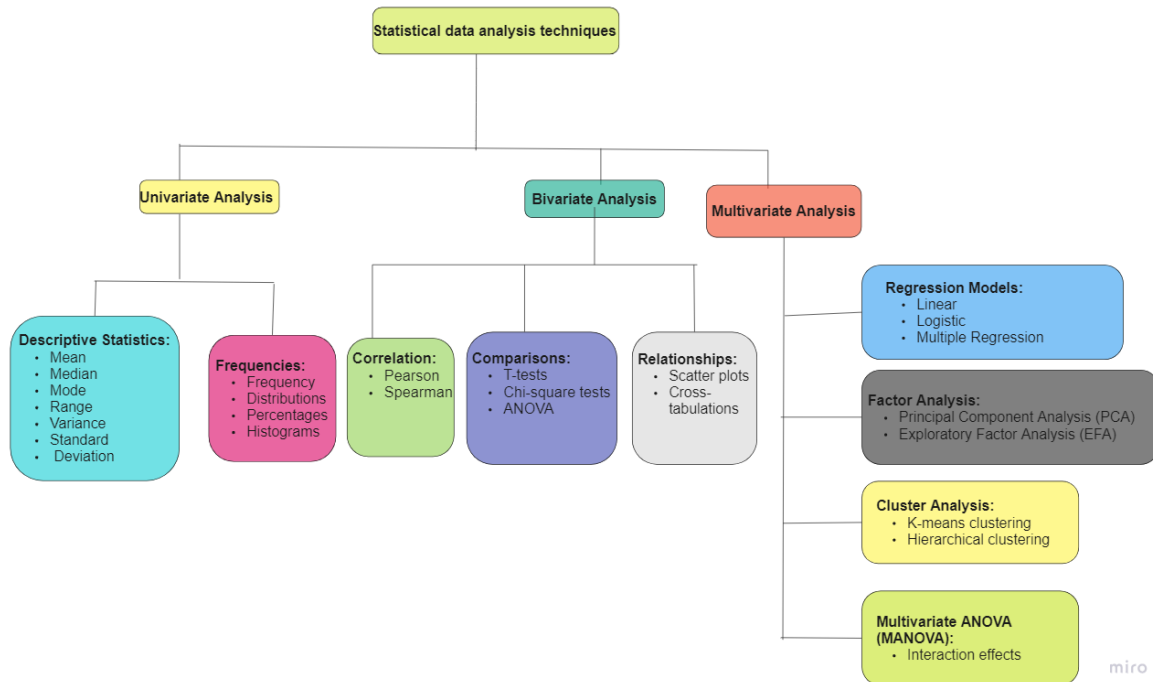


Figure 4.6: Statistical data analysis techniques

Source: Burns *et al.* (2017:317)

Data analysis involves describing the dataset by calculating statistics that characterise its various aspects (Burns *et al.*, 2017:317). To analyse the collected data, IBM's Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) versions 28, with particular emphasis on multivariate statistical analysis and structural equation modelling, were used to address the hypotheses. Analysis techniques also comprise univariate and bivariate statistical analysis and the succeeding sections indicate its relevance to this study. Figure 4.6 contains an illustration of the statistical data analysis techniques.

In accordance with Figure 4.6, the next sections, sections 4.3.11, 4.3.12 and 4.3.13 outline how the study's data were analysed using univariate, bivariate and multivariate statistical analysis techniques.

4.3.11 Univariate statistics

4.3.11.1 Descriptive statistical analysis

Descriptive statistical methods are employed to describe and summarise data from a sample (Hair *et al.*, 2018:257). As Zikmund and Babin (2016:364) put it, these methods transform large quantities of raw data into basic characteristics. According to Burns and Bush (2014:318), this type of analysis helps researchers describe the typical participant and identify general patterns. Wiid and Diggins (2013:248) note that the type of measurement determines the statistics that can be derived. Frequencies and percentages are suitable descriptive statistics for nominal and ordinal data, while the mean (a measure of central tendency) and standard deviation (a measure of dispersion) are appropriate for interval and ratio data (Clark & Watson, 2019:1412; Clow & James, 2014:378). Utilising descriptive statistical methods also aids researchers in addressing research questions and objectives (Shukla, 2008:99). For this study, the most commonly used descriptive statistics, as noted by Malhotra (2017:486), included measures of location, variability and shape. Each of these categories contains specific sub-elements that are crucial in understanding different aspects of the dataset.

Measures of Location: According to Hair *et al.* (2019:167), measures of location, also referred to as measures of central tendency, are numerical values that pinpoint the central point of a dataset, indicating the centre of the data distribution. Several measures can be utilised to determine the location of the central value, including the mean, mode and median (Mertler *et al.*, 2021:22). The mean is calculated by dividing the sum of all data values by the total number of data points, serving as a widely recognised "average" that represents the central location of the data (Hair *et al.*, 2019:101; Malhotra, 2020:209). Unlike the mean, the mode identifies the value that occurs most frequently in a dataset, highlighting the most common data point (Rubin, 2021:10969). The median, on the other hand, is the middle value when the data points are arranged in ascending or descending order, effectively dividing the dataset into two halves (Pallant, 2020:175). In this study, the mean was employed as the primary measure of location to summarise the central tendency of the dataset.

Measures of Variability: A measure of variability is a numerical value that quantifies the extent of variation or dispersion within a dataset, indicating how much the data points differ from each other or a central value (Mertler *et al.*, 2021:24). Commonly employed measures of variability include the range, variance and standard deviation (Gosling, 1995:9; Howell, 2016:83). The range is one of the simplest measures of variability, calculated as the difference between the lowest and highest values in a dataset (Howell, 2016:83; Mertler *et al.*, 2021:24). Variance measures the average squared distance of each data point from the mean, providing insight into the overall

spread of the data (Rubin, 2021:10970). The standard deviation is the square root of the variance and indicates the average distance of each observation from the mean. It effectively describes whether the data points are closely clustered around the mean or widely dispersed (Mertler *et al.*, 2021:24). In this study, the standard deviation was computed as the primary measure of variability to assess the dispersion of the data around the mean.

Measures of Shape: Measures of shape are statistical tools, including skewness and kurtosis, used to describe the form or distribution of a dataset (Howell, 2016:83-84). These measures are particularly valuable for assessing the normality of distribution (Cooper, 2020:21). Typically, normality for skewness and kurtosis is indicated by values between -1 and 1 (López-Martín *et al.*, 2022:387), although some scholars suggest that values between -2 and 2 are also acceptable (Demir, 2022:397). Skewness quantifies the symmetry of a dataset, where a value of 0 indicates perfect symmetry (Eberl & Klar, 2024:2). When skewness is close to 0, the distribution is considered symmetric, meaning the data points are evenly distributed around the centre (Cooper, 2020:22). However, real-world data rarely exhibit perfect symmetry, making skewness an important measure for understanding the degree of asymmetry in the distribution of a variable (Demir, 2022:398). A positive skewness value suggests that the data are skewed to the right (positively skewed), while a negative value indicates a left skew (negatively skewed) (López-Martín *et al.*, 2022:387). Kurtosis is another measure used to evaluate the shape of a distribution, specifically focusing on the concentration of values around the mean or mode (Eberl & Klar, 2024:2). It assesses the "tailedness" or "peakness" of a distribution. High kurtosis indicates a distribution with a sharp peak and heavier tails, suggesting that data points are concentrated near the mean with a higher likelihood of extreme values (Mertler *et al.*, 2021:24). Low kurtosis, on the other hand, indicates a flatter distribution with lighter tails, meaning the data are more evenly spread out (Mix, 2020:24). Kurtosis values between -1.0 and 1.0 are typically considered excellent indicators of normality, but values within the range of -2.0 to 2.0 are generally acceptable in many research contexts (Cooper, 2020:22; George & Mallery, 2016:114;). In this study, both skewness and kurtosis were employed as measures of shape to assess the normality and distribution characteristics of the dataset.

The following section discusses the reliability of the study.

4.3.11.2 Frequency analysis

Clow and James (2014:116) note that frequency distribution is one of the simplest methods for organising and presenting data. Malhotra (2017:484) points out that it is usually the first step in data analysis. This procedure involves recording the number of responses for each value of each variable (Zikmund & Babin, 2016:337). Pallant (2020:57) emphasises using frequencies for

categorical variables, such as demographic data. According to Malhotra (2017:331), a frequency table contains frequency counts, percentages and cumulative percentages for all possible values of each variable. Researchers use these metrics to create charts or graphs for effectively communicating findings (Burns & Bush, 2017:321). In this study, statistical tables, and pie- and bar charts were used to report on the frequency distribution, specifically in describing the sample's demographic (Section 5.5.1) and online shopping background information (Section 5.5.2). The frequencies of the scaled items were also reported (Section 5.4.3).

4.3.12 Bivariate statistics

4.3.12.1 Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis is a critical component in evaluating the quality and consistency of measurement instruments or scales, especially in marketing research (Burns *et al.*, 2017:215). It ensures that an instrument consistently produces stable and dependable results across various contexts and periods, thereby underpinning the credibility of research findings. A key approach to assessing reliability is test-retest reliability, which evaluates the stability of results over time by administering the same test to the same participants under similar conditions at different points (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021:8). High correlation between the two sets of results indicates strong reliability, suggesting that the instrument reliably captures the intended variable over time (Hair *et al.*, 2019:121). In addition to test-retest reliability, other forms of reliability are also significant. Interrater reliability assesses the degree of agreement between different raters or observers using the same instrument, which is crucial in studies involving subjective judgments (Taherdoost, 2020:15). Parallel forms reliability compares results from different but equivalent versions of a test to ensure consistency across different forms of the measurement (Clark *et al.*, 2021:78). However, for multi-item scales commonly used in marketing research, internal consistency reliability is used most often. This type of reliability examines the consistency of responses across items within the same scale, ensuring all items measure the same underlying construct. Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used statistic for assessing internal consistency, providing an average correlation between items on a scale (Clark *et al.*, 2021:92).

Cronbach's alpha is particularly valued because it quantifies the degree to which items on a scale are interrelated (Hair *et al.*, 2019:1138). An alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating better reliability. According to established thresholds, Cronbach's alpha between 0.80 and 0.96 signifies exceptional reliability, while a range of 0.70 to 0.80 is considered satisfactory (Kline, 2023:252). A coefficient between 0.60 and 0.70 is deemed acceptable, though lower values suggest that the scale may need refinement (Pallant, 2020:247). For scales with fewer than 10 items, where Cronbach's alpha may be less reliable due to the small number of items,

the average inter-item correlation can be reported instead, with acceptable values typically ranging from 0.15 to 0.50 (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020:180). The importance of reliability analysis extends beyond ensuring consistent measurements; it is also a prerequisite for validity. A reliable scale is a necessary condition for validity, though it alone does not guarantee that the scale accurately measures what it is intended to measure (Taherdoost, 2020:17). Thus, reliability analysis should precede validity testing in the process of scale development and validation, ensuring that the instrument is not only consistent but also stable across different conditions (Hair *et al.*, 2019:130). Consequently, reliability analysis, particularly through the use of Cronbach's alpha, played a foundational role in ensuring that this study's measurement instruments were dependable and trustworthy (Kline, 2023:301).

4.3.12.2 Validity analysis

Validity in measurement refers to the extent to which a scale accurately measures the concept it is intended to measure, ensuring that the scores derived from the scale truly represent the underlying construct (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021:7). This concept is essential in ensuring that research findings are both meaningful and reliable. A perfectly valid scale would ideally be free from both random and systematic errors, indicating that the measurement process is both consistent and accurate (Furr, 2021:45). This focus on accuracy is critical because the validity of a scale directly impacts the validity of the conclusions drawn from the research (Malhotra, 2020:320). If a scale lacks validity, the results may not accurately reflect the intended construct, leading to potentially flawed interpretations and decisions (Hair *et al.*, 2019:192). There are several types of validity, each serving to assess different aspects of how well a scale measures a concept. Content validity examines whether the items within a scale adequately cover the full domain of the construct being measured (Boateng *et al.*, 2018:7). This type of validity is often assessed through expert judgment, ensuring that all relevant aspects of the construct are represented. Criterion validity, on the other hand, assesses how well the scale performs when compared to other relevant criteria or measures (Clark & Watson, 2019:14124). It is typically established through correlations with similar constructs, demonstrating that the scale behaves as expected in relation to other established measures (Boateng *et al.*, 2018: 9).

Construct validity is arguably the most difficult to ascertain, as it requires assessing whether the scale and its constructs coherently align with the underlying theory and research (Clark & Watson, 2019:1420). This type of validity is crucial for ensuring that the scale not only measures what it is supposed to measure but also fits within the broader theoretical framework of the research. Construct validity includes three key elements: nomological validity, which assesses how well the construct correlates with related but distinct constructs; convergent validity, which examines the

internal consistency and correlation between constructs that are theoretically related; and discriminant validity, which evaluates the degree of dissimilarity from constructs that are theoretically different (Hair *et al.*, 2019:195). Assessing construct validity is often done through statistical analyses, with an average inter-item correlation of 0.15 to 0.5, indicating both convergent and discriminant validity (Clark & Watson, 2019:1423). This statistical range suggests that the items within the scale are related enough to reflect the same construct (convergent validity) while being distinct from items measuring different constructs (discriminant validity) (Furr, 2021:48). The importance of validity cannot be overstated, as it is critical for ensuring that scales are free from measurement error. Validity is essential for accurately measuring the intended constructs and without it, the reliability and utility of the research findings are significantly compromised (Boateng *et al.*, 2018:10). This study's measurement instrument was thoroughly examined and reported in Chapter 5, sections 5.6, 5.9 and 5.11.

4.3.12.3 One-sample t-test

A t-test is a statistical method used to assess whether the observed differences in means between two groups are significant enough to suggest an actual effect on certain variables, rather than occurring due to random chance. According to Welman *et al.* (2005: 237) and Mishra *et al.* (2019:407), t-tests are utilised to analyse comparisons between two groups. Chapman and Feit (2015:142) describe a t-test to compare the average of one set of data against the average of another set. Three types of t-tests can be performed: the one-sample t-test, the paired sample t-test and the independent sample t-test. An independent sample t-test is executed to compare the means of two independent groups to establish the presence or absence of statistical evidence that the associated population means are significantly different. Paired sample t-tests are conducted on related participants to examine differences between means within the same group, as explained by Al-Kassab (2022:134). On the other hand, a one-sample t-test is used to determine if the mean of a single sample significantly differs from a known or hypothesised value, such as the midpoint of a scale (Clow & James, 2014:409; Schober & Vetter, 2019:911). This test is particularly useful for confirming the significance of scaled variables or constructs by comparing the sample mean against a predetermined benchmark (Wadhwa & Marappa-Ganeshan, 2023). This study used a one-sample t-test to confirm the statistical significance of the dependent and independent variables. Since these items were measured on a six-point Likert scale, the test value was set at 3.5 and the confidence level at 99 percent.

4.3.12.4 Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis measures relationships among variables by assessing how changes in one variable are associated with changes in another (McDaniel & Gates, 2018:344; Silver *et al.*,

2013:204). It determines the extent to which changes in one variable directly correlate with changes in another (McDaniel & Gates, 2018:367). Pallant (2020:150) identifies the Product-Moment correlation (r) statistic, also known as Pearson's correlation coefficient, as the most commonly used method. This coefficient ranges from -1 (perfect negative correlation) to +1 (perfect positive correlation) (Pallant, 2020:150). A value of -1 indicates that an increase in one variable results in an exact decrease in another (Lacobucci & Churchill, 2010:452). A higher coefficient signifies a stronger relationship, while a coefficient of zero denotes no relationship (Berndt & Petzer, 2011:239). Pallant (2020:139) states that a correlation value between 0.1 and 0.29 indicates a small relationship, 0.3 to 0.49 is a medium relationship and 0.5 to 1 is a strong relationship. For this study, Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated between all latent factor pairs to determine the correlation and assess the nomological validity of the proposed measurement model in structural equation modelling.

4.3.13 Multivariate statistics

4.3.13.1 Factor analysis: Principal components analysis

Factor analysis, particularly in the context of principal components analysis (PCA), is a vital statistical technique utilised for data reduction and summation (Keith, 2019:475). The primary goal of factor analysis is to simplify complex datasets by reducing a large number of variables, which often exhibit interrelationships, into a more manageable number of factors that capture the essential patterns in the data while retaining much of the original information (Gregorich *et al.*, 2021:4259). As stated by Malhotra (2020:636), this method is pivotal in situations where the data is too complex to interpret directly. By identifying and grouping correlated variables into factors, researchers can better understand the underlying structure of the data, thus making it more accessible for analysis and interpretation (Keith, 2019:108). Watkins (2021:66) describes factor analysis as a method that serves not only to reduce the number of variables but also to organise the data more effectively. Watkins (2021:66) highlights that this approach is particularly useful when dealing with a large set of variables that measure the characteristics of a small sample, a situation where some variables may be redundant due to their intercorrelation.

Through factor analysis, variables can be consolidated into a smaller number of uncorrelated factors, which still retain the essence of the original data (Valderrama *et al.*, 2022:509). This process is beneficial in various fields, including psychology, marketing and social sciences, where researchers are often confronted with large datasets that need to be distilled into a comprehensible form without losing critical information (Flynn, 2021:78). Factor analysis encompasses two main approaches: exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Watkins, 2021:66). EFA is typically employed in the initial stages of research to

explore the underlying structure of the data without preconceived hypotheses about the relationships among the variables. According to Gregorich *et al.* (2021:4259), EFA aims to identify the underlying constructs by reducing a large set of variables into a smaller, more interpretable set of factors. This method is particularly useful in situations where the researcher does not have a clear expectation of how the variables should relate to one another and is instead seeking to uncover the latent structure of the data (Malhotra, 2020:725).

In contrast, CFA is used to test specific hypotheses or theories about the relationships among variables (Keith, 2019:348). As Kumar *et al.* (2018:505) explain, CFA is employed when the researcher has a clear expectation of how the variables are related and seeks to confirm that the data fits this expected structure. This approach is particularly valuable in the later stages of research, where the goal is to validate the factor structure identified through EFA or derived from theoretical considerations. Malhotra (2020:727) further clarifies that CFA is used to determine if the observed variables load onto the expected factors as hypothesised. This method involves specifying a model based on theoretical considerations and then testing the model's fit to the observed data, typically using goodness-of-fit indices. Both EFA and CFA are essential tools in the researcher's toolkit, each serving distinct purposes depending on the stage of research and the nature of the data. EFA provides a flexible, data-driven approach to uncovering latent structures, while CFA offers a more rigorous, hypothesis-driven method for confirming these structures (South & Jarnecke, 2017:113). Together, both analyses enable researchers to effectively manage complex datasets, ensuring that the resulting factors are both meaningful and reliable. The choice between EFA and CFA depends on the research objectives, with EFA being more exploratory in nature and CFA being more confirmatory, as the names suggest. Each method has its strengths and when used appropriately, they can significantly enhance the validity and interpretability of research findings (Kumar *et al.*, 2018:516).

For this study, EFA was employed to identify the underlying factor structure without imposing any preconceived structure on the data. This approach was chosen because the study aimed to explore potential patterns and relationships among variables that had not been previously established in unison. By using EFA, the study seeks to uncover the latent dimensions that may exist within the dataset, providing a foundation for further confirmatory analysis in future research stages. Following the initial analyses, CFA was used during the measurement model specification step of structural equation modelling (Section 4.3.13.3) to confirm the structure model when testing the hypotheses.

4.3.13.2 Multicollinearity diagnostics

When conducting multivariate statistical analysis on a dataset, it is crucial to consider multicollinearity (Hair *et al.*, 2018:21). This occurs when the inter-item correlation between independent variables is extremely high, making it challenging to evaluate the relative impact of a predictor variable on the dependent variable (Malhotra, 2017:586). Multicollinearity occurs when there is an excessively high correlation between independent variables, potentially compromising the reliability of the analysis by inflating standard errors and making it difficult to determine the true effect of each predictor variable (Hair *et al.*, 2019:45; Malhotra, 2020:586). To address this concern, a tolerance test is commonly used, which involves performing regression analysis where each independent variable is treated as the dependent variable in relation to the other predictors (Keith, 2019:226). The tolerance value, which is calculated as $1-R^2$, should ideally be above 0.1 and a variance inflation factor (VIF) value below 10, indicating that multicollinearity is low (Hair *et al.*, 2019:118). This study's data were inspected for multicollinearity concerns and the tolerance and VIF values reported in Section 5.8.

4.3.13.3 Structural equation modelling

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a robust multivariate statistical method that combines factor analysis and multiple regression, enabling researchers to examine complex relationships between both observed and latent variables (Khan *et al.*, 2019:407). SEM is particularly valuable in fields such as marketing, psychology and social sciences because it facilitates the simultaneous testing of direct and indirect effects within a theoretically driven model (Hair *et al.*, 2019:45). Unlike exploratory data analysis techniques, SEM is confirmatory in nature, enabling researchers to validate a theoretical model by assessing relationships between constructs hypothesised based on prior research or theoretical considerations (Kline, 2023:98). One of the significant strengths of SEM is its ability to handle complex models with multiple dependent variables, accounting for measurement error and thus providing more accurate and reliable results (Jönsson *et al.*, 2024:45). This feature is especially critical in marketing research, where consumer behaviour is influenced by a multitude of factors that interact in complex ways.

The process of SEM involves specifying a measurement model, which defines the relationships between latent constructs (unobserved variables) and their corresponding indicator variables (observed variables) (Malhotra, 2020:475). This is a critical step, as the measurement model determines how well the data fits the theoretical model. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), a component of SEM, is used to validate the measurement model, ensuring that the observed variables accurately represent the latent constructs (Watkins, 2021:67). The model's fit is assessed using the comparative-fit index (CFI), incremental-fit index (IFI), the Tucker-Lewis index

(TLI), the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), which provide evidence that the hypothesised relationships among variables are consistent with the data (West *et al.*, 2023:184).

Following the validation of the measurement model, a structural model is constructed to test the stated hypotheses by means of path analysis. This structural model is guided by the study's proposed or hypothesised model as supported by the literature investigation. Upon performing the analysis of the structural model, the data will guide the researcher to accept or reject the null hypotheses, with subsequent inferential implications. While SEM offers significant advantages, such as the ability to model complex relationships and account for measurement error, it also has limitations. SEM requires large sample sizes to obtain stable and reliable estimates and it assumes that the data is normally distributed, which may not always be the case (Sim *et al.*, 2022:76). Despite these limitations, SEM remains a robust tool for testing theoretical models and is widely used in academic research. In this study, SEM was employed to test the 27 hypotheses outlined in the proposed model. The main goal was to address the empirical objectives and the research problem, ultimately supplying a framework for understanding the factors that influence South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting as well as their online purchase intentions. The detailed analysis is covered under Section 5.11.

4.3.14 Prepare and present the final research report

The last step in the marketing research process involves preparing and presenting the final research report (Hair *et al.*, 2018:74). This report can be delivered either in written or oral form, outlining the research process, results and recommendations (Malhotra, 2017:760). The final report for this study is detailed in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 contains the analysis of the empirical results, using statistical techniques to uncover patterns and relationships relevant to the research questions. The findings are interpreted in the context of the theoretical framework and existing literature, providing a foundation for the discussion and recommendations in the succeeding chapter. Chapter 6 focuses on discussing the findings presented in Chapter 5, drawing conclusions and offering practical recommendations based on the research. Additionally, it outlines the study's limitations and suggests areas for future research, concluding with a summary of the overall contributions of the study.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the research methodology used in the study. It begins by establishing the research paradigm, following Burns *et al.* (2017), to ensure alignment with the research objectives. A descriptive research design was selected for its suitability in

empirically testing hypotheses. A quantitative approach was employed, using an online survey to collect data from South African consumers aged 19 to 58, active on social media. This method efficiently reached a broad demographic, enabling the collection of large datasets for thorough analysis. The chapter outlines various statistical techniques, including EFA to examine the data's underlying structure and briefly discusses CFA to validate this structure. SEM was introduced as a key technique for testing complex variable relationships, implemented alongside multivariate analysis using SPSS and AMOS software, version 28.

The chapter concludes by noting that the empirical findings from the pilot and main studies will be discussed in the next chapter, providing insights into the practical application of the research methodology and its effectiveness in addressing the research questions. These methods laid a solid foundation for the analysis and interpretation of the study's results, which will be presented in detail in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of the empirical findings obtained during this study. Building on the methodologies established in Chapter 4, this chapter focuses on presenting the results of the study in relation to the research objectives. The empirical analysis is guided by the data gathered through the final pilot-tested (Section 5.2) and validated questionnaire. This is followed by a discussion of the data-gathering process in Section 5.3 and the preliminary data analysis (Section 5.4). The respondents' demographic and online shopping background information is analysed in Section 5.5, providing insights that serve as the context for the subsequent analyses. Next, Section 5.6 covers PCA to identify factors influencing online purchase intentions. Descriptive statistical analysis (Section 5.7) summarises mean, standard deviation and frequency distributions. Multicollinearity diagnostics (Section 5.8) ensure no high correlation among independent variables. Correlation analysis (Section 5.9) examines key variable relationships, followed by hypothesis testing (Section 5.10). The final sections focus on SEM to test the theoretical model, discussing model specification, reliability and the impact of remarketing and retargeting on online purchase intentions.

Chapter 5 presents and interprets the statistical outcomes in relation to the research questions. Chapter 6 will further explore the implications of these results for both theory and practice.

5.2 Pilot test results

The purpose of conducting a pilot study was to pre-test the questionnaire and ensure both the face and content validity of the measurement instrument. A pilot study was carried out after incorporating feedback from the pre-testing process. This pilot study aimed to establish the internal-consistency reliability of the various questionnaire constructs. The pilot study was conducted using a non-probability convenience sample of 52 South African consumers who were excluded from the main study's sample. The pilot testing results are shown in Table 5.1, including the constructs, item codes, the number of items per construct, the mean values, standard deviation (σ), the sample size (n) and Cronbach's Alpha (α) values.

Table 5.1: Summary of the pilot testing results

Construct	Item codes	Items	Mean	σ	n	α
Awareness	AW1 – AW3	3	3,1667	1,20185	52	0.683
Attitudes towards remarketing	ATM1 – ATM3	3	3,6090	1,17475	52	0.590
Attitudes towards retargeting	ATT1 – ATT3	3	3,7436	1,31128	52	0.655
Online purchase intention	PI1 – PI4	4	3,9087	1,04557	52	0.589
Conversion conditions	CC1 – CC6	9	3,6763	1,11604	52	0.822
Informativeness	IF1 – IF4	4	3,7452	1,14027	52	0.797
Privacy concerns	PC1 – PC5	5	3,5077	1,17921	52	0.770
Intrusiveness	ITR1 – ITR5	5	3,3192	1,24381	52	0.876
Website design	WD1 – WD5	5	3,5500	1,12014	52	0.771
Online review attitudes	ORA1 – ORA6	5	3,8013	,82184	52	0.688
Online review quality	ORQ1 – ORQ6	6	3,9199	,98711	52	0.700
E-reputation	REP1 – REP3	3	4,2372	1,25651	52	0.767
E-trust	ETR1 – ETR5	5	3,3462	1,19549	52	0,839

The internal consistency reliability of each construct was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (α), with the values for each construct summarised in Table 5.1. According to Kline (2023:252), a Cronbach's alpha between 0.80 and 0.96 signifies exceptional reliability, while a range of 0.70 to 0.80 is considered satisfactory. A coefficient between 0.60 and 0.70 is deemed acceptable, though lower values suggest that the scale may need refinement (Pallant, 2022:247). While the Cronbach alpha values shown in Table 5.1 ranged from 0.589 to 0.876, the instrument produced an overall $\alpha=0.937$. This suggests the entire instrument is highly reliable. The highest values were recorded for intrusiveness ($\alpha=0.876$), followed by e-trust ($\alpha=0.839$) and conversion conditions ($\alpha=0.822$). Several constructs, including attitudes towards retargeting, awareness, online review attitudes, online review quality, privacy concerns, website design and informativeness, produced alpha values ranging between 0.655 and 0.797, concluding their acceptable reliability. The constructs that did not meet the 0.60 threshold were attitudes towards remarketing ($\alpha=0.590$) and online purchase intention ($\alpha=0.589$), but this was very close.

This degree of internal consistency reliability across the constructs in combination with the high reliability of the entire scale, suggests that the instrument was appropriate for further analysis in the full study. Based on the pilot test findings, the final questionnaire for the main study was drafted (refer to Annexure A). Table 5.2 details the questionnaire's sections, constructs, item descriptions and assigned codes to facilitate easier data interpretation.

Table 5.2: Questionnaire constructs, item description and assigned codes

Construct	Item descriptions	Code
SECTION C: Awareness, attitudes and online shopping purchase intentions		
Construct 1 - Awareness	I have seen remarketing and retargeting advertisements based on products I have searched for.	AW1
	I have seen photos of remarketing and retargeting advertisements based on products I have searched for.	AW2
	I have seen online advertisements and received emails for products I have searched for.	AW3
Construct 2- Attitudes Toward Remarketing	I am happy to see emails of products I searched for but did not purchase.	ATM1
	I respond positively to emails about products I searched for but did not purchase.	ATM2
	I appreciate the technique of receiving emails about products I searched for but did not purchase.	ATM3
Construct 3 – Attitudes Towards Retargeting	I am happy to see online and social media advertisements of products I searched for but did not purchase.	ATT1
	I respond positively to online and social media advertisements of products I searched for but did not purchase.	ATT2
	I appreciate the technique of using cookies to remind me of products I searched for but did not purchase.	ATT3
Construct 4 – Online Purchase Intention	I will buy products I searched for that are advertised on websites, social media and email reminders.	PI1
	I aspire to buy products I searched for that are promoted on websites, social media and email reminders.	PI2
	I am likely to buy products I searched for that are promoted on websites, social media and email reminders.	PI3
	I plan to buy products I searched for that are promoted on websites, social media and email reminders.	PI4
Construct 5– Conversion conditions	I would purchase a product I initially searched for if the remarketing/retargeting advertisements were personalised and relevant to me.	CC1
	I would purchase a product I initially searched for if the remarketing/retargeting advertisements provide a promotional code or offer.	CC2
	I would purchase a product I initially searched for if the retargeting/remarketing advertisements are relevant to my physical location.	CC3
	I would purchase a product I initially searched for if the retargeting/remarketing advertisements are from a brand I trust	CC4
	I would purchase a product I initially searched for if the retargeting/remarketing advertisements are fun and entertaining.	CC5
	I would purchase a product I initially searched for if the retargeting/remarketing advertisements allow me to make an immediate purchase.	CC6

Table 5.2: Questionnaire constructs, item description and assigned codes
(continued...)

Construct	Item descriptions	Code
SECTION D: Factors influencing attitudes towards remarketing/retargeting		
Perceived value and risk of remarketing and retargeting strategies		
Construct 6- Informativeness	Remarketing/retargeting advertising is a good source of information about the products I searched for.	IF1
	Remarketing/retargeting advertising provides timely information about the products I searched for.	IF2
	Remarketing/retargeting advertising provides meaningful information about how other consumers use the products I searched for.	IF3
	Remarketing/retargeting advertising provides useful information about products I searched for that are new to me.	IF4
Construct 7– Privacy Concerns	I am worried that my personal data (such as browsing behaviour, name or location) may be misused by the online shopping sites I visit.	PC1
	When I visit websites to search for products, I suspect that they keep track of what I click on.	PC2
	I am afraid that the personal data I share with the websites I visit are not stored safely.	PC3
	I am afraid that my personal data associated with the websites I visit is distributed without my permission.	PC4
	I am afraid that my personal data associated with the websites I visit can be accessed by people I do not know.	PC5
Construct 8 – Intrusiveness	Remarketing/retargeting advertisements are a distraction.	ITR1
	Remarketing/retargeting advertisements are intrusive.	ITR2
	Remarketing/retargeting advertisements are irritating.	ITR3
	Remarketing/retargeting advertisements are invasive.	ITR4
	Remarketing/retargeting advertisements are interfering.	ITR5
Online business factors		
Construct 9 – Website Design	The websites I visit frequently provide in-depth information about their products.	WD1
	The websites I visit frequently do not waste my time.	WD2
	It is quick and easy to complete a transaction on the websites I visit frequently.	WD3
	The level of personalisation on the websites I visit frequently is about right, not too much or too little.	WD4
	The websites I visit frequently have a good selection of products.	WD5

**Table 5.2: Questionnaire constructs, item description and assigned codes
(continued...)**

Construct	Item descriptions	Code
SECTION D: Factors influencing attitudes towards remarketing/retargeting		
Online business factors		
Construct 10 – Online review attitudes	When I buy products online, I always read reviews about these products first.	ORA1
	When I buy products online, the reviews about these products are helpful for my decision-making.	ORA2
	When I buy products online, the reviews about these products make me confident in purchasing them.	ORA3
	If I do not read the reviews of the products that I intend to buy, I worry about my purchase decisions.	ORA4
	*When I intend to buy a product online, reading the reviews is a burden to me.	ORA5
	*When I intend to buy a product online, reading the reviews irritates me.	ORA6
Construct 11 – Online review quality	Online reviews about products I intend to buy are sufficient.	ORQ1
	Online reviews about products I intend to buy are objective.	ORQ2
	Online reviews about products I intend to buy are understandable.	ORQ3
	Online reviews about products I intend to buy are credible.	ORQ4
	Online reviews about products I intend to buy are clear.	ORQ5
	In general, the quality of the reviews about the products I intend to buy is high.	ORQ6
Construct 12 – E-trust	I feel safe in my transactions with online stores.	ETR1
	I believe the online store can protect my privacy.	ETR2
	I select online stores that I believe are honest.	ETR3
	In general, I feel that online stores would provide me with good service.	ETR4
	In general, I feel that online stores are trustworthy.	ETR5
Construct 13 – E-reputation	In general, my preferred online stores have an excellent public image.	REP1
	In general, I feel safe in my transactions with my preferred online stores.	REP2
	In general, I consider that my preferred online stores have an excellent reputation.	REP3
<i>*Reversed</i>		

The data-gathering process applied in this study follows.

5.3 Data gathering process

Following the sampling plan outlined in the previous chapter, this study collected data from South African consumers through an online, computer-administered questionnaire using the survey method. The data-gathering process targeted 450 respondents, focusing on a diverse range of consumers across South Africa. To facilitate the distribution of the questionnaire, the researcher

created dedicated Facebook and LinkedIn accounts and utilised WhatsApp as a supplementary channel to administer the survey. The questionnaire, developed using Google Forms, was designed to be straightforward and user-friendly, ensuring that respondents could complete it with minimal effort. Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant university ethics committee before data collection, ensuring that all research protocols were adhered to, including protecting respondent anonymity and confidentiality. The survey period was from January to May 2024.

The recruitment of participants began on Facebook and LinkedIn, where the researcher created a research-specific page and profile. The page and profile were used to post detailed information about the study, emphasising the voluntary nature of participation and assuring respondents that no personal information would be collected. The Facebook page and LinkedIn profile and the shared content were in line with the university's social media and marketing guidelines and approval was secured from the institution's Corporate Communications Department. The Google Forms questionnaire link was shared in posts on these two social media platforms, encouraging participants to complete the survey and to share the link within their own networks. WhatsApp was employed as an additional distribution method to further enhance participation using snowball sampling. The questionnaire link was shared directly with prospective participants via WhatsApp messages, particularly targeting known groups and networks that aligned with the research's demographic focus. Respondents were encouraged to forward the survey link to their contacts, thereby creating a snowball effect and expanding the reach of the survey.

This multi-platform approach proved effective in reaching close to the desired number of respondents. Upon completion of the questionnaire, responses were automatically saved to a secure, encrypted Google Drive server, which was accessible only to the researcher and promoters. The researcher ensured that all data remained confidential and was stored in compliance with the university's data protection policies. The use of online tools allowed the researcher to monitor response rates in real-time and adjust recruitment strategies as needed within the five-month period to ensure the sample size threshold was met.

5.4 Preliminary data analysis

It is recommended to conduct a preliminary data analysis before handling the final dataset. This analysis includes coding and tabulation. The following sections provide an overview of the coding, data cleaning and tabulation processes for the final dataset.

5.4.1 Coding information

The questionnaire used in this study was divided into four sections to gather comprehensive data on consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies, as well as their online purchase intentions.

Section A focused on collecting demographic information such as province of residence, gender, age, language preferences and monthly income.

Section B captured respondents' online shopping behaviour and preferences, such as their preferred online shopping sites and categories, frequency of online browsing and purchasing behaviour, whether they used their email and mobile number to create online shopping accounts and their top three preferred social media platforms.

Section C contained the definitions and examples of remarketing and retargeting strategies and measured participants' awareness, attitudes and online purchase intentions related to remarketing and retargeting. It also measured conversion conditions for online purchases.

Section D was divided into two sections, where D1 explored the perceived value (informativeness) and risk (privacy concerns and intrusiveness) associated with remarketing and retargeting and D2 covered online business factors (web design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation).

The coding framework enabled the systematic categorisation of the responses, which facilitated data analysis and interpretation. Table 5.3 below presents the complete list of codes, variables and values assigned to each response option across all sections, ensuring that the data were structured in a way that allowed for both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

Table 5.3: Coding information

Question	Code	Variable	The value assigned to responses
Section A: Demographical Information			
Question 1	PR	Province of residence	Eastern Cape (1); Free State (2); Gauteng (3); KwaZulu-Natal (4); Limpopo (5); Mpumalanga (6); Northern Cape (7); North-West (8); Western Cape (9)
Question 2	GD	Gender	Male (1); Female (2); Other (3)
Question 3	AG	Age at last birthday	(open answer) -> recoded to: 19-28 (1); 29-38 (2); 39-48 (3); 49-58 (4)
Question 4	PL	Language	Afrikaans (1); English (2); IsiNdebele (3); IsiXhosa (4); IsiZulu (5); Sepedi (6); Sesotho (7); Setswana (8); SiSwati (9); Tshivenda (10); Xitsonga (11); Other (12)
Question 5	MI	Monthly gross Income	<R4500 (1); R4501-R12500 (2); R12501-R30000 (3); R30001-R52500 (4); R52501-R72000 (5); R72001-R110000 (6); >R110001 (7)

Table 5.3: Coding information (continued...)

Question	Code	Variable	The value assigned to responses
Section B: Online shopping background information			
Question 1	TS	Top 3 shopping sites	Amazon (1); Builders Warehouse (2); Checkers (3); Clicks (4); Game Stores (5); Gumtree (6); iStore (7); Loot (8); Makro (9); Mr Price (10); NetFlorist (11); OneDayOnly (12); Pick 'n Pay (13); Superbalist (14); Takealot (15); Woolworths (16); Yuppiechef (17); Zando (18); Other (19)
Question 2	BO	Browsing frequency	Rarely (1); Hourly (2); Daily (3); Weekly (4); Monthly (5)
Question 3	PO	Purchasing frequency	Rarely (1); Daily (2); Weekly (3); Monthly (4); Quarterly (5); Annually (6)
Question 4	TC	Shopping categories	Appliances (1); Automotive (2); Baby, toddlers & kids (3); Camping, travel & outdoors (4); Clothing & fashion (5); DIY & home improvement (6); Electronics & entertainment/gaming (7); Garden, patio & pool (8); Health, beauty & personal care (9); Home furniture (10); Household essentials & groceries (11); Liquor (12); Office stationery & books (13); Smart technologies (14); Sport and training (15); Pets (16); Other (17)
Question 5	EM	Email signup	Yes (1); No (2); I don't have an email (3)
Question 6	MN	Mobile number signup	Yes (1); No (2); I do not have a mobile number
Question 7	SM	Top three social media platforms	Facebook (1); Instagram (2); Pinterest (3); Snapchat (4); Telegram (5); TikTok (6); Twitter (7); YouTube (8); WhatsApp (9)
Section C: Awareness, attitudes and online shopping purchase intentions			
Item 1 - 3	AW1 – AW3	Awareness	
Item 4 - 6	ATM1 – ATM3	Attitudes towards remarketing	Strongly disagree (1); Disagree (2); Disagree somewhat (3); Agree somewhat (4); Agree (5); Strongly agree (6)
Item 7 - 9	ATT1 – ATT3	Attitudes towards retargeting	
Item 10 - 13	PI1 – PI4	Online purchase intention	
Item 14 - 19	CC1 – CC6	Conversion concern	
Section D: Factors Influencing attitudes towards remarketing/retargeting			
Perceived value and risk of remarketing and retargeting strategies			
Item 1 - 4	IF1 – IF4	Informativeness	Strongly disagree (1); Disagree (2); Disagree somewhat (3); Agree somewhat (4); Agree (5); Strongly agree (6)
Item 5 - 9	PC1 – PC5	Perceived concerns	
Item 10 - 14	ITR1 – ITR5	Perceived intrusiveness	
Online business factors			
Item 15 - 20	WD1 – WD5	Website design	
Item 21 - 26	ORA1-ORA6	Online review attitudes	Strongly disagree (1); Disagree (2); Disagree somewhat (3); Agree somewhat (4); Agree (5); Strongly agree (6)
Item 27 - 32	ORQ1 – ORQ6	Online review quality	
Item 33 - 38	ETR1 – ETR5	E-trust	
Item 39 - 42	REP1 – REP3	E-reputation	

The following section comprises an explanation of the data-cleaning process applied to the dataset.

5.4.2 Data cleaning

Data cleaning was performed to exclude questionnaires that did not meet the criteria for the defined target population. Additionally, questionnaires with more than 10 percent missing data were discarded. The questionnaire was distributed within the first five months (January to May) of 2024 when 369 respondents completed it. This computed to an initial response rate of 82 percent as subtracted from the intended 450. After applying the data cleaning process, which included removing incomplete cases and performing a Mahalanobis distance test to remove outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), 325 valid cases remained. These 325 cases signify a 72.2 percent success rate and data analysis proceeded. It is important to note that, for questionnaires that had missing values of less than 10 percent, the mode value was used to replace missing responses for scaled items.

The next section will provide details on the tabulation methods applied in this study.

5.4.3 Tabulation of variables

Tabulation follows both the coding and data-cleaning processes. Table 5.4 outlines the frequencies recorded for each scale response recorded in sections C and D.

Table 5.4: Tabulation of variables

Scale item	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Disagree somewhat 3	Agree somewhat 4	Agree 5	Strongly agree 6
Section C: Awareness, attitudes and online shopping purchase intentions						
Construct 1 - Awareness						
AW1	13	18	45	125	76	48
AW2	5	20	56	108	80	56
AW3	15	17	41	109	77	66
Construct 2 – Attitudes towards remarketing						
ATM1	19	33	66	102	71	34
ATM2	20	42	60	87	78	38
ATM3	29	31	51	96	77	41
Construct 3 – Attitudes towards retargeting						
ATT1	14	28	65	88	86	44
ATT2	15	30	56	98	94	32
ATT3	14	20	65	101	78	47

Table 5.4: Tabulation of variables (continued...)

Scale item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Construct 4 – Online purchase intentions						
PI1	19	28	51	98	88	41
PI2	19	41	52	79	94	40
PI3	12	22	56	100	85	50
PI4	20	24	53	95	99	34
Construct 5 – Conversion conditions						
CC1	14	28	60	93	91	39
CC2	5	18	55	114	88	45
CC3	21	28	47	91	100	38
CC4	21	29	41	89	99	46
CC5	17	25	49	96	92	46
CC6	17	21	55	94	97	41
Section D: Factors influencing attitudes towards remarketing/retargeting						
Perceived value and risk of remarketing and retargeting strategies						
Construct 6 – Informativeness						
IF1	6	19	42	124	100	34
IF2	4	23	62	110	88	38
IF3	19	30	39	87	97	53
IF4	5	20	69	88	102	41
Construct 7 – Privacy concerns						
PC1	9	12	50	95	87	72
PC2	4	16	34	80	116	75
PC3	11	12	51	94	88	69
PC4	5	23	57	83	90	67
PC5	11	14	50	74	108	68
Construct 8 – Perceived intrusiveness						
ITR1	13	29	69	95	91	42
ITR2	11	25	78	83	86	42
ITR3	10	29	68	96	76	46
ITR4	10	26	78	88	82	41
ITR5	13	39	65	75	82	51
Online business factors						
Construct 9 – Website design						
WD1	4	10	62	127	86	36
WD2	7	11	39	111	110	47
WD3	3	7	58	105	97	55
WD4	3	13	47	115	114	33
WD5	5	10	49	112	93	56

Table 5.4: Tabulation of variables (continued...)

Scale item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Online business factors						
Construct 10 – Online review attitudes						
ORA1	2	12	44	104	117	46
ORA2	4	9	44	103	105	60
ORA3	1	11	54	119	88	52
ORA4	24	27	34	90	95	55
*ORA5	4	12	110	81	54	64
*ORA6	4	22	98	79	46	76
Construct 11 – Online review quality						
ORQ1	1	9	62	124	96	33
ORQ2	2	3	55	137	96	32
ORQ3	1	3	59	120	108	34
ORQ4	1	7	65	119	97	36
ORQ5	2	6	58	121	104	34
ORQ6	3	2	59	117	96	48
Construct 12 – E-trust						
ERT1	12	15	47	91	109	51
ERT2	14	26	56	91	92	46
ERT3	3	16	60	96	98	52
ETR4	5	13	56	101	104	46
ETR5	7	17	60	105	95	41
Construct 13 – E-reputation						
REP1	5	25	43	85	108	59
REP2	5	7	46	104	109	54
REP3	5	10	32	120	116	42
<i>*Reversed</i>						

The following section provides details about the participants who took part in this study.

5.5 Demographic and online shopping background information

This section provides an illustrative description of the study's sample in terms of key demographic attributes. Following this, the participants' online shopping background information is reported and interpreted. The demographic and background information are visualised using pie charts, bar graphs and frequency tables. The statistics from these two sections are vital in contextualising the findings of the hypotheses testing outcomes.

5.5.1 Sample description

As denoted in Section 5.4.2, of the 450 intended online questionnaire responses, 369 were received, resulting in an initial response rate of 82 percent. After the data cleaning process, which involved excluding incomplete or improperly filled questionnaires and outlier removal, 325 were deemed usable, translating to a final response rate of 72.2 percent. This section begins by providing a comprehensive description of the sample's demographic characteristics, including participants' province of residence, gender, age, preferred language and monthly income before tax. Figure 5.1 and Table 5.5 outline the sample's demographic profile.

Table 5.5: Study sample's demographic profile

Variable	<i>f</i>	%		<i>f</i>	%
Province of Residence			Preferred language		
Eastern Cape	23	7.1	Afrikaans	30	9.2
Free State	51	15.7	English	95	29.2
Gauteng	79	24.3	IsiNdebele	12	3.7
KwaZulu-Natal	27	8.3	IsiXhosa	25	7.7
Limpopo	21	6.5	IsiZulu	31	9.5
Mpumalanga	31	9.5	Sepedi	24	7.4
Northern Cape	32	9.8	Sesotho	30	9.2
North-West	43	13.2	Setswana	46	14.2
Western Cape	18	5.5	SiSwati	20	6.2
Age			Tshivenda	12	3.7
19-28	49	15.1	Xitsonga	0	0
29-38	128	39.4	Monthly Income before tax		
39-48	84	25.8	< R4500	38	11.7
49-58	64	19.7	R4 501–R12 500	44	13.5
Gender			R12 501–R30 000	66	20.3
Male	102	31.4	R30 001–R52 500	74	22.8
Female	211	64.9	R52 501–R72 000	72	22.2
Other	12	3.7	R72 001–R110 000	22	6.8
			R110001+	9	2.8

The data indicates a high concentration of respondents in Gauteng (24.3 percent), followed by Free State (15.7 percent) and North-West (13.2 percent). Other provinces like Mpumalanga and Northern Cape are close in representation, with 9.5 percent and 9.8 percent of the respondents, respectively. KwaZulu-Natal has 8.3 percent, indicating moderate representation, while Eastern Cape accounts for 7.1 percent of the respondents and Limpopo has 6.5 percent, both of which show lower, yet notable, proportions of the survey participants. Lastly, Western Cape has the smallest percentage of respondents, at 5.5 percent, indicating that fewer respondents come from this province compared to the others. This suggests that Gauteng and Free State either have larger populations or benefit from better survey coverage, skewing the geographic representation.

There is a clear gender imbalance, with 64.9 percent of respondents being female and 31.4 percent male. A small percentage (3.7 percent) chose not to disclose their gender. This skew may indicate the need for greater male engagement in future surveys.

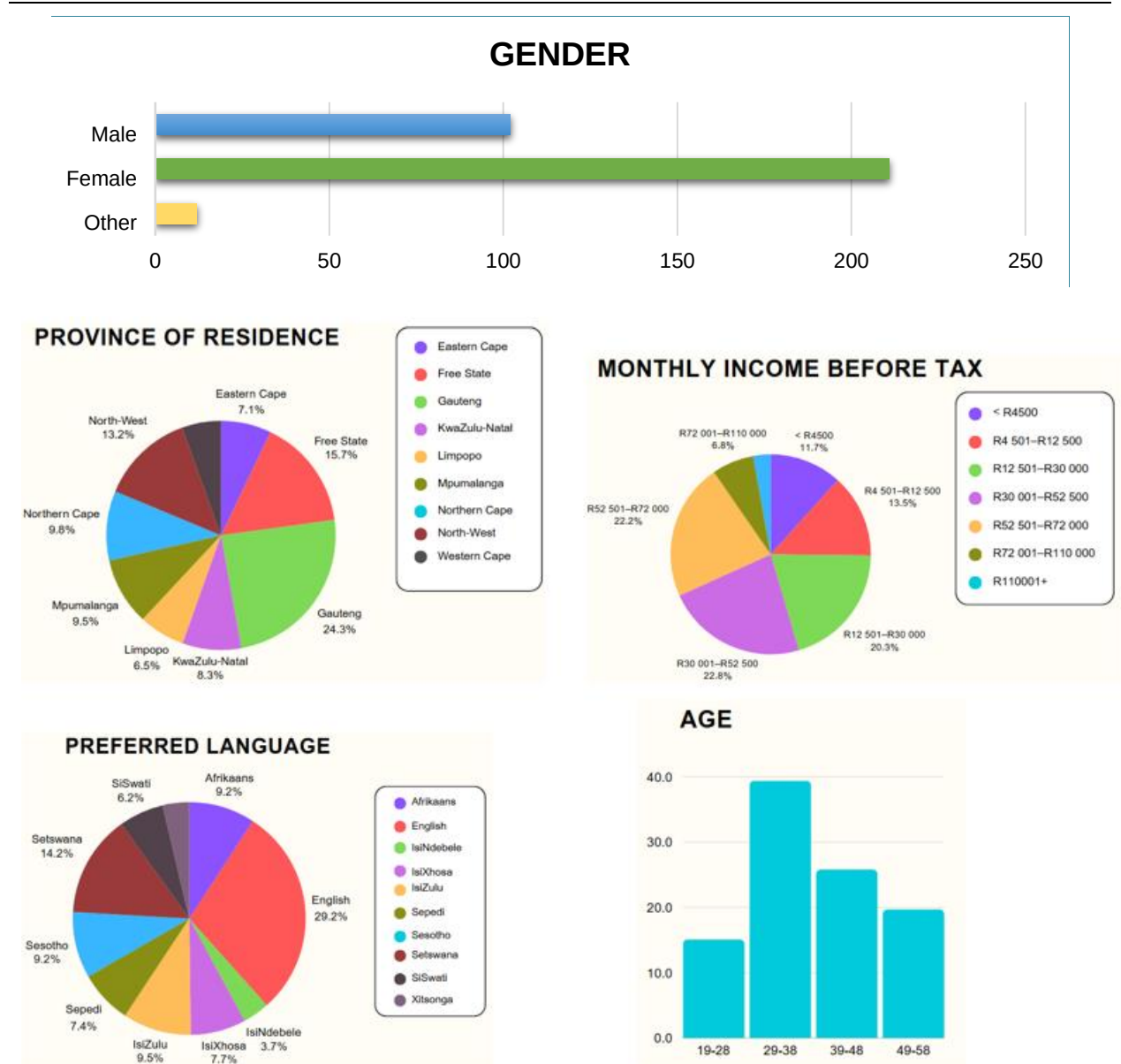


Figure 5.1: Study sample's demographic profile

The age distribution shows that respondents between 29 and 38 years make up the largest group (39.4 percent), followed by those aged 39 to 48 (25.8 percent) and 49 to 58 (19.7 percent). Younger respondents (19-28) are less represented (15.1 percent) and there is a minimal representation of those under 19 and over 58. The most common age is 45, accounting for 9.5 percent of the sample. This indicates stronger engagement among middle-aged individuals, while younger and older participants are less represented. In terms of language, English is the dominant

choice, preferred by 29.2 percent of respondents, with a notable preference for Setswana (14.2 percent). IsiZulu is next, chosen by 9.5 percent of respondents. Both Afrikaans and Sesotho have equal representation, with 9.2 percent each, showing a similar preference among participants. Other languages, while less common, show significant diversity, necessitating multilingual approaches for effective communication.

Income data reveals that 22.8 percent of respondents earn between R30 001 and R52 500, close behind 22.2 percent in the R52 501 to R72 000 bracket. The concentration within these middle-income groups highlights the primary economic status of the respondents. Following this, 20.3 percent of respondents fall into the R12 501 to R30 000 income range, making it the third largest group. A smaller portion, 13.5 percent, earns between R4 501 and R12 500. Meanwhile, 11.7 percent of respondents report earning less than R4 500, placing them in the lowest income bracket. At the higher end of the spectrum, 6.8 percent of respondents earn between R72 001 and R110 000 and only 2.8 percent of respondents report earning more than R110 000.

In summary, the dataset reflects a strong presence of Gauteng and Free State respondents, a predominance of females, a well-represented middle-aged group and the dominance of English and Setswana as their preferred languages. Most respondents fall within middle-income brackets, offering a clear demographic and economic profile to inform decision-making and future outreach strategies. These findings had several managerial and practical recommendations (refer to Section 6.5.1).

5.5.2 Online shopping background information

Section B of the questionnaire consisted of several questions aimed at gathering participants' background information regarding their online shopping habits and digital platform usage. The first question (TS) asked participants to select their top three preferred online shopping sites from a provided list. The second and third questions (BO, PO) explored participants' frequency of browsing and purchasing products online, respectively. The fourth question (TC) prompted participants to choose their top five favourite online shopping categories from a range of options. Additionally, participants were asked whether they had used their email (EM) or mobile number (MN) to sign up for online shopping accounts. Finally, the last section (SM) asked participants to rank the top three social and digital media platforms they used most frequently. The results are presented using pie charts, bar graphs and frequency tables to provide a clear overview of participants' online shopping preferences and digital media engagement.

The data collected provides a clear picture of respondents' preferred online shopping platforms. Takealot stands out as the most popular choice, with 80 respondents representing 24.6 percent of the total sample. This indicates that a large proportion of consumers favour this platform for

their online shopping needs. Other prominent platforms include Checkers, Makro and Gumtree, each selected by 67 respondents, accounting for 20.6 percent of the sample. These platforms share a significant portion of consumer preferences, suggesting they are key players in the market.

Clicks were chosen by 61 respondents (18.8 percent), indicating its strong position in the health, beauty and pharmaceutical segments. Woolworths also ranks highly, with 57 respondents (17.5 percent), reflecting its popularity in food and clothing categories. Amazon was selected by 31 respondents (9.5 percent), which is comparatively lower than local platforms, likely due to its less prominent presence in the South African market.

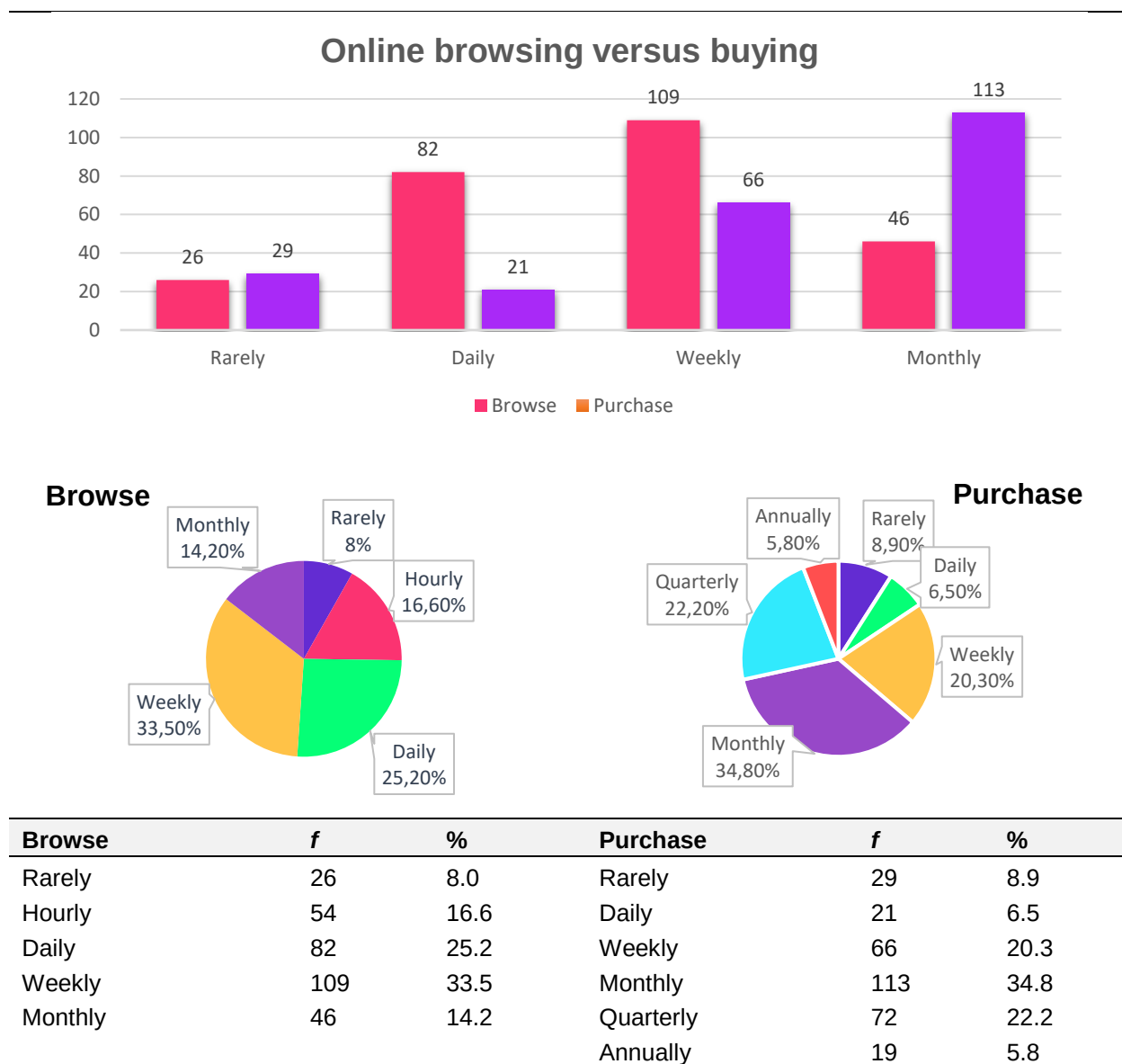
Table 5.6: Study sample's Top three preferred online shopping sites



The data also includes niche platforms such as OneDayOnly, with 38 respondents (11.7 percent) and Mr D and Uber Eats, both selected by 48 respondents (13.3 percent). These platforms cater to specific needs, such as daily deals and food delivery. Small but notable portions of the sample chose Shein and Cotton On, both of which cater to fashion. Additional responses included mentions of The Wool Shoppe, Cape Union Mart, Sunsky Online, Typo and Milady's, reflecting interest in specialised platforms that focus on particular product categories such as yarn, outdoor gear and fashion.

Overall, the data shows a strong preference for well-established online shopping platforms, with some representation for more niche and specialised services. The distribution of responses across these platforms highlights the diversity in consumer preferences for both general and specific product categories.

Table 5.7: Sample's browsing and purchase frequency, on average



The data in Table 5.7 presents respondents' browsing and purchase frequency, providing insights into consumer behaviour patterns. In terms of browsing frequency, the largest portion of respondents (33.5 percent) report browsing weekly, indicating that a significant number of people engage with online content on a regular basis. Daily browsing is the second most common, with 25.2 percent of respondents visiting websites daily. A smaller proportion of respondents browse monthly (14.2 percent) and rarely (8 percent), and only 16.6 percent browse hourly, which suggests that frequent, ongoing browsing is not the norm for most participants.

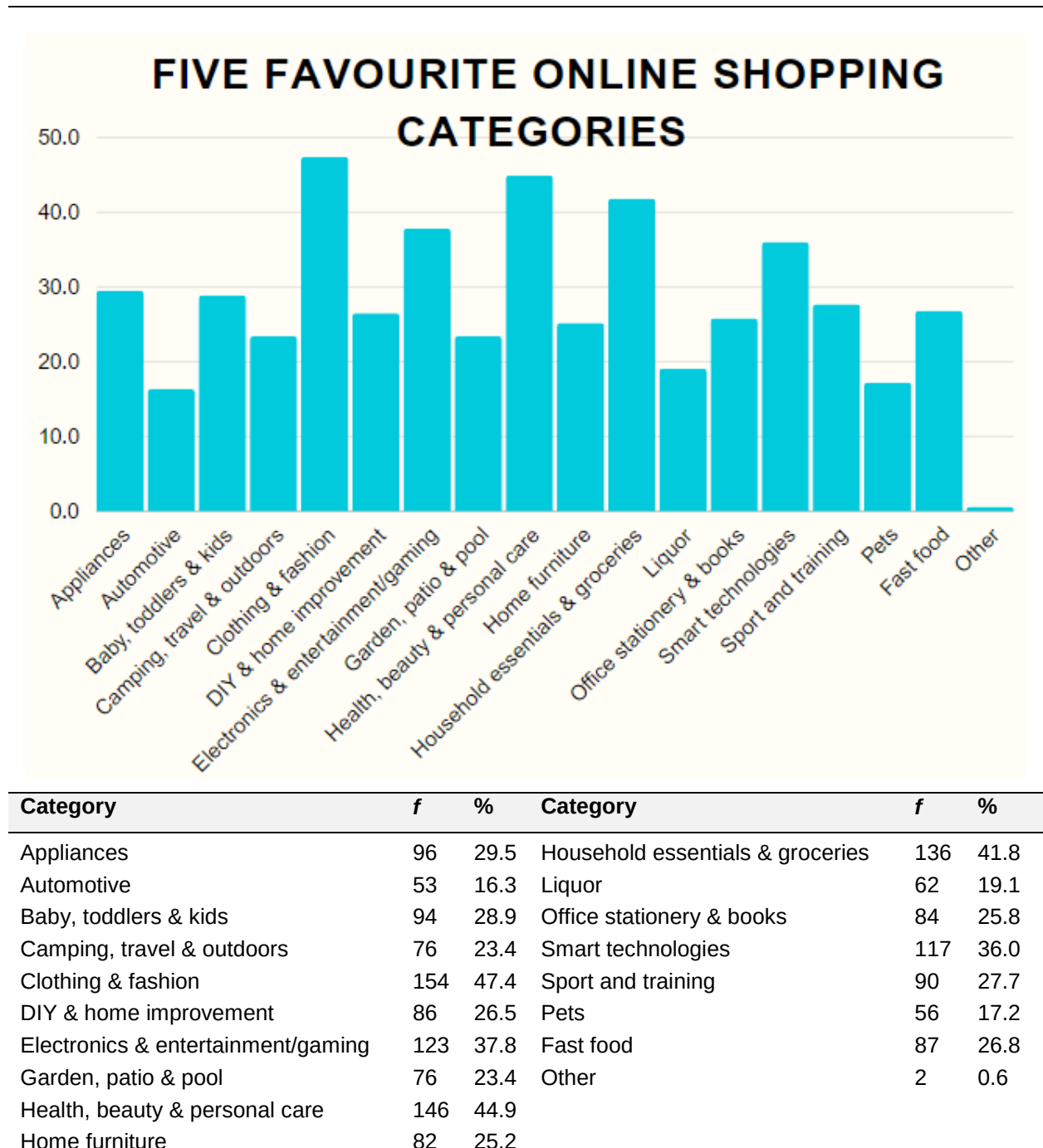
For purchase frequency, the largest group of respondents (34.8 percent) make purchases on a monthly basis, highlighting that most consumers tend to shop online at least once a month. A sizable 22.2 percent make purchases quarterly, showing a pattern of less frequent but periodic shopping. Weekly purchases are made by 33.5 percent of respondents, indicating regular purchasing behaviour among some participants. On the less frequent end, 8.9 percent of respondents rarely make purchases and 5.8 percent shop annually, suggesting that a minority of participants are infrequent shoppers. Only 6.5 percent of respondents make daily purchases, emphasising that daily online shopping is uncommon. In summary, most respondents browse weekly or daily, while their purchasing habits are more concentrated around monthly and quarterly frequencies. This suggests that while people engage frequently with online platforms, their actual purchasing tends to be less frequent, with monthly shopping being the most common. Clearly, 25.2 percent of the sample browse online for products daily, but only 6.5 percent actually make a purchase. Similarly, 33.5 percent of respondents browse weekly, yet only 20.3 percent complete a purchase during this period.

These findings highlight a significant gap between consumer browsing behaviour and their purchasing decisions, suggesting that while consumers are frequently engaging with products online, fewer are committing to buy. E-retailers can implement several strategies to encourage consumers to move from browsing to buying. One approach is to offer personalised and timely incentives, such as discounts, limited-time offers, or free shipping on items consumers have previously viewed, which can provide the push needed to convert browsing into purchases. Enhancing the user experience by simplifying the checkout process, offering multiple payment options, or providing detailed product reviews and comparisons can also reduce hesitation during purchase decisions. Another effective strategy is the use of remarketing strategies, such as email reminders or targeted advertisements, to re-engage consumers who have shown interest in certain products but did not complete their purchase. Additionally, creating urgency through limited stock notifications or exclusive promotions for frequent browsers could help motivate buyers to make quicker purchasing decisions. By focusing on these strategies, e-retailers can

better align consumers' browsing habits with purchasing behaviour, ultimately improving conversion rates.

Equally important for online retailers to know is which online shopping categories consumers prefer. This study requested respondents to choose their five most preferred categories, with the outcome shown in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Sample's top five favourite online shopping categories



The data shows that Clothing & Fashion is the most popular category, with 154 respondents, accounting for 47.4 percent of the total sample. This suggests that nearly half of the respondents engage with this category, making it the dominant product segment. Health, Beauty & Personal Care comes in second, with 146 respondents, representing 44.9 percent, followed by Household Essentials & Groceries, with 136 respondents (41.8 percent). Both categories indicate a strong demand for daily necessities and self-care products. Electronics & Entertainment/Gaming also ranks highly, with 123 respondents (37.8 percent), reflecting consumer interest in technology and entertainment products.

Smart Technologies follows closely with 117 respondents (36.0 percent), showing similar engagement levels. On the other hand, it is evident from the data that there is a notable difference between the categories respondents prefer to browse and the actual purchases made. For example, 47.4 percent of respondents browse for Clothing & fashion items, making it the most popular category, but only 29.5 percent report making actual purchases in the Appliances category, which is less frequently browsed.

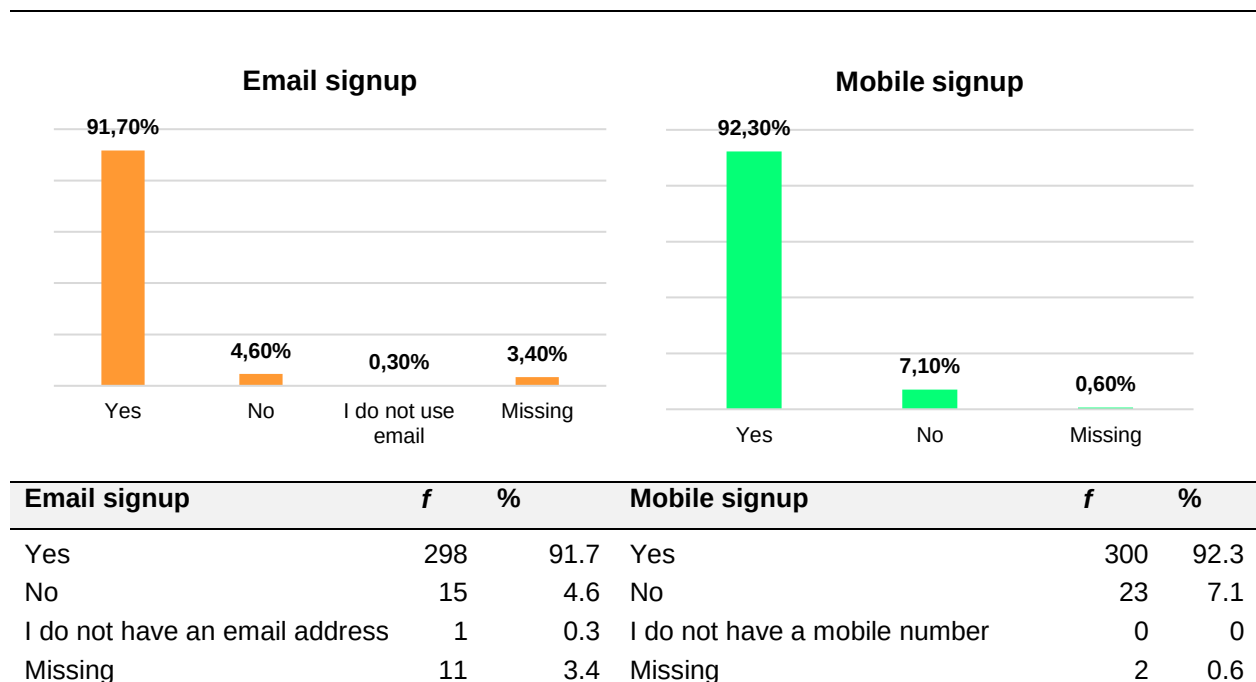
Similar to the prior findings, 44.9 percent of respondents are interested in Health, beauty & personal care, yet the percentage of purchases in this category is relatively lower compared to browsing activity. This indicates that although consumers are highly engaged with certain product categories, the browsing behaviour does not always translate into purchases at the same rate. E-retailers can focus on improving trust and convenience in categories where the purchase rate is lower. For categories like Automotive and Liquor, which show lower engagement (with only 16.3 percent and 19.1 percent of respondents browsing), retailers can offer detailed product descriptions, and flexible return policies and incentivise purchases through loyalty programs. Addressing potential barriers, such as perceived risks in purchasing higher-value items online (e.g., Automotive), could also increase conversion rates. These findings were vital to this study's recommendations (refer to Section 6.5.1).

Brands need to know which avenues to effectively target as many consumers as possible. For this reason, this study required respondents to indicate whether they used their mobile number or email address to sign up for online accounts/profiles. The results are shown in Table 5.9.

The results indicate that the vast majority of respondents, 91.7 percent (298 individuals), used their email address to sign up for online shopping accounts. A smaller portion, 4.6 percent (15 respondents), did not use their email for sign-ups and an even smaller group, 0.3 percent (1 respondent), was unsure whether they used their email or not. This suggests that email remains the dominant method for creating online shopping accounts, with very few opting for other methods or being uncertain about their choice.

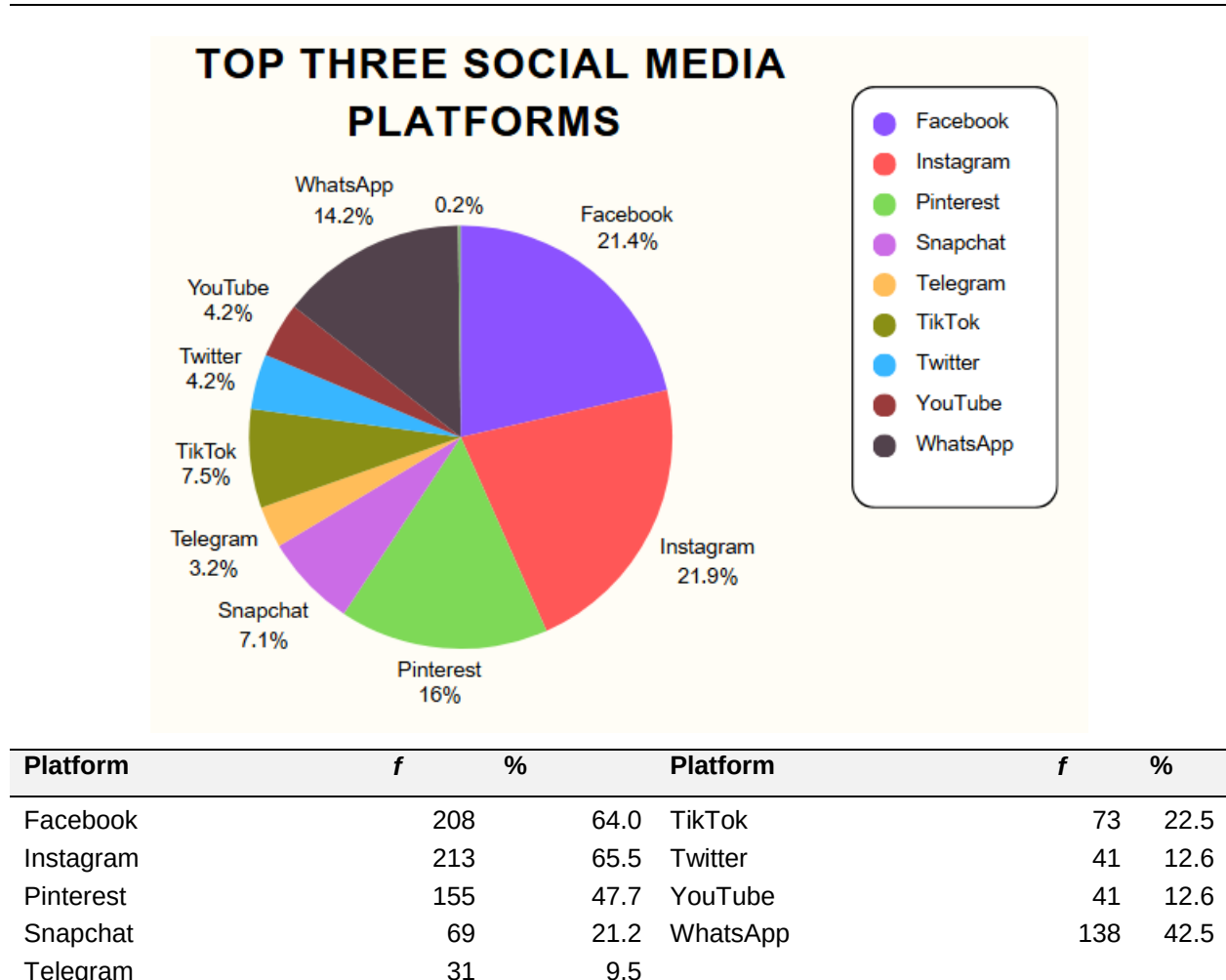
The data reveals that 92.3 percent of respondents (300 individuals) used their mobile numbers to sign up for online shopping accounts, demonstrating a strong preference for this method. A much smaller portion, 7.1 percent (23 respondents), chose not to use their mobile number for sign-ups, suggesting that they may prefer alternative methods such as email. Additionally, 0.6 percent of the sample (2 respondents) had missing data, which could indicate a small level of non-response or incomplete information. This overall trend highlights that mobile numbers are the preferred option for online account creation for the vast majority of users. To further capitalise on this preference, e-retailers should continue to streamline mobile number sign-up processes, making it quick and secure for users. Since most respondents are comfortable using their mobile number, offering features like two-factor authentication (2FA) through SMS can enhance both convenience and security, reassuring users about the safety of their accounts. Additionally, retailers can leverage mobile numbers to send personalised promotions and order updates, which may increase customer engagement and satisfaction. For the small percentage who prefer alternative methods, e-retailers should ensure that options like email-based sign-ups are also available and easy to use, catering to all user preferences. By accommodating both mobile and alternative sign-up methods, retailers can maintain inclusivity while enhancing the overall user experience. These are some notable suggestions, which are expanded in the study's recommendations section (Chapter 6).

Table 5.9: Sample's use of their email address and mobile number to sign up for online shopping accounts



This study further aimed to inform the industry about consumers' preferred social media platforms since this would help them with effective retargeting strategies. The respondents were required to rank their top three preferred platforms, as reported below and outlined in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10: Top three social media platforms used by the sample



The analysis of the data shows that Instagram is the most frequently used social media platform, with 65.5 percent (213 respondents) selecting it. Facebook follows closely with 64 percent (208 respondents). WhatsApp also has a significant user base, with 42.5 percent (138 respondents) indicating its use. Pinterest has a moderate level of engagement, with 47.7 percent (155 respondents), while Snapchat is used by 21.2 percent (69 respondents) of respondents. Platforms like TikTok and Twitter show lower engagement, with 22.5 percent (73 respondents) and 12.6 percent (41 respondents), respectively. Telegram and YouTube rank among the lowest, with 9.5 percent (31 respondents) for Telegram and 12.6 percent (41 respondents) for YouTube.

Instagram and Facebook dominate social media use, while platforms like Pinterest, WhatsApp and TikTok also have notable but smaller followings. Telegram and YouTube have the least engagement among the platforms analysed and would, therefore, not be the primary targeting

platforms. The information reported in sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 provides the context of all subsequent statistical analysis and should be interpreted as such and not generalised to the entire South African population.

5.6 Exploratory principal components analysis

The exploratory principal components analysis (PCA) was conducted to assess the underlying structure of the data across three sections: Section C, Section D1 (perceived value and risk) and Section D2 (online business factors). Key metrics such as KMO, Bartlett's chi-square, significance, number of items, communalities, factor loadings, eigenvalues, variance explained and Cronbach's alpha are crucial in interpreting the factor structure, reliability and adequacy of the model. Table 5.13 provides an overview of key statistical metrics, including KMO values, Bartlett's test results, communalities, factor loadings, eigenvalues, explained variance and Cronbach's alpha for each construct. This table is essential in understanding the factor structure, reliability and adequacy of the scales used in the analysis. The data demonstrates the robustness of the measurement model and highlights the items that were retained or removed based on their statistical performance.

Table 5.11: Exploratory principal components analysis results

Factors	Items	Communalities	Factors Loading	Eigenvalues	α
Section C: Awareness, attitudes and online shopping purchase intentions					
KMO = 0.897	Bartlett's test of sphericity (chi-square) = 2461.626		Degrees of freedom = 171	Variance = 63.84%	
Awareness	3	0.735 – 0.735	0.836 – 0.839	6.682	0.816
Attitudes towards remarketing	3	0.740 – 0.768	0.798 – 0.827	2.056	0.835
Attitudes towards retargeting	3	0.705 – 0.728	0.757 – 0.814	1.239	0.823
Online purchase intentions	4	0.499 – 0.635	0.686 – 0.698	1.188	0.741
Conversion conditions	6	0.447 – 0.718	0.456 – 0.805	0.964	0.795
Section D1: Perceived value and risk of remarketing and retargeting strategies					
KMO = 0.888	Bartlett's test of sphericity (chi-square) = 3251.830		Degrees of freedom = 231	Variance = 59.36%	
Informativeness	4	0.588 – 0.622	0.751 – 0.784	4.176	0.778
Privacy concerns	5	0.575 – 0.640	0.723 – 0.777	2.289	0.820
Perceived intrusiveness	5	0.567 – 0.622	0.742 – 0.779	1.846	0.828
Section D2: Online business factors					
KMO = 0.841	Bartlett's test of sphericity (chi-square) = 1482.940		Degrees of freedom = 91	Variance = 63.86%	
Website design	5	0.524 – 0.617	0.676 – 0.734	7.474	0.811
Online review attitudes	*5(6)	0.663 – 0.702	0.677 – 0.812	2.489	0.855
Online review quality	6	0.518 – 0.607	0.650 – 0.723	1.505	0.829
E-trust	*3(5)	0.721 – 0.777	0.653 – 0.778	1.431	0.833
E-reputation	3	0.721 – 0.752	0.759 – 0.825	1.150	0.822
<i>*Removed</i>					

The results of the principal components analysis (PCA) in Table 5.11 provide a detailed breakdown of the data structure across sections C, D1 and D2, focusing on various consumer attitudes and behaviours related to online shopping purchase intentions. The table shows the number of items per factor, communalities, factor loadings, eigenvalues and Cronbach's alpha (α) for each factor, along with measures of sampling adequacy (KMO) and variance explained by the factors.

Five distinct factors emerged from the 19-items Section C, namely awareness, attitudes towards remarketing, attitudes towards retargeting, online purchase intentions and conversion conditions. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure for Section C was 0.897, indicating that the data is highly suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity (chi-square = 2461.626, df = 171) returned a significant value, suggesting sufficient correlations between variables for conducting factor analysis. The total variance explained by the five factors was 63.84 percent, which is a strong result for social science research. The awareness factor consists of three items with strong communalities (0.735 for all three items) and high factor loadings (0.836 to 0.839). The eigenvalue of 6.682 and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.816 indicate that the awareness factor was a robust factor

with good internal consistency. Similarly, attitudes towards remarketing and attitudes towards retargeting, each with three items, exhibited acceptable communality values, ranging from 0.705 to 0.768 and strong factor loadings between 0.757 and 0.827. Both factors show high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.835 and 0.823, respectively. The online purchase intention factor, consisting of four items, also had acceptable commonalities (0.499 to 0.635) and factor loadings (0.686 to 0.698) and its reliability ($\alpha = 0.741$) was still above the 0.70 thresholds. The final Section C factor, conversion conditions, had six items, returning communality values ranging from 0.447 to 0.718, factor loadings from 0.456 to 0.805 and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.795, thereby confirming its internal consistency reliability.

The first part of Section D (D1) comprised three scales that measured perceived value and risk associated with remarketing and retargeting strategies. These three factors returned a KMO of 0.888, a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity (chi-square = 3251.830, df = 231), explaining 59.36 percent of the variance. The first sub-factor, informativeness, had four items with communalities ranging from 0.588 to 0.622, factor loadings from 0.751 to 0.784, an eigenvalue of 4.176 and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.778, indicating its reliability. The first of two perceived risk measures, namely privacy concerns had five items returning communalities ranging from 0.575 to 0.640, factor loadings from 0.723 to 0.777, an eigenvalue of 2.289 and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.820. Perceived intrusiveness also had five items, which produced communalities between 0.567 and 0.622, factor loadings from 0.742 to 0.779, an eigenvalue of 1.846 and returned a Cronbach's alpha of 0.828.

The second part of Section D (D2) consisted of five sub-measures that tested the online business factors section suggested to be relevant in determining consumers' attitudes and online purchase intentions. This combined measure presented a KMO value of 0.841, showing good sampling adequacy, a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity (chi-square = 1482.940, df = 91) and explained 63.86 percent of the variance. Website design had five items with communalities between 0.524 and 0.617, factor loadings between 0.676 and 0.734, an eigenvalue of 7.474 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.811. Online review attitudes had six items initially, but one item (ORA4) was removed due to resulting in low reliability for the complete scale. The remaining five items had communalities between 0.663 and 0.702, factor loadings between 0.677 and 0.812, an eigenvalue of 2.489 and an alpha of 0.855. Online review quality included six items with communalities between 0.518 and 0.607, factor loadings from 0.650 to 0.723, an eigenvalue of 1.505 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.829. Both e-trust and e-reputation had three items, the former having had two items removed (ETR1 and ETR2) since it impacted the reliability and validity of the trust measurement. The commonality values for the two factors ranged from 0.721 to 0.777,

and factor loadings from 0.653 to 0.825. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.833 and 0.822 for e-trust and e-reputation, respectively.

In summary, the PCA results from Table 5.11 reveal well-defined factors across sections C, D1 and D2, with robust commonalities, high factor loadings and strong Cronbach's alpha values across the factors, confirming good internal consistency reliability. Following the confirmation of the 55-item, 13-factor structure, further statistical analysis was appropriate, beginning with descriptive statistics and a one-sample t-test.

5.7 Descriptive statistical analysis and a one-sample t-test

This section details the descriptive statistics for the scale items used in the study. These statistics, including measures of central tendency (mean), variability (standard deviation) and shape (skewness and kurtosis), are crucial for summarising data and understanding the dataset. Responses were measured on a six-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree), with higher mean values indicating greater respondent agreement. Additionally, a one-sample t-test was performed on the independent factors to determine their statistical significance within the study. Each factor had to exceed the preset value of 3.5, with a p-value less than 0.01, to be deemed statistically significant. The results are shown in Table 5.12.

In Table 5-12, the descriptive statistics for several constructs in this study are detailed, providing valuable insights into consumer responses to elements such as awareness, attitudes towards remarketing, attitudes towards retargeting, online purchase intention, conversion concern, perceived value, perceived concerns, perceived intrusiveness, website quality, online review attitudes, online review quality, e-trust and e-reputation.

Table 5.12: Descriptive statistics and one-sample t-test results

Factors	Mean	σ	Skewness	Kurtosis	t-value	p-value
Awareness	4.23	1.07	-0.705	0.638	12.279	< 0.001
Attitudes towards remarketing	3.86	1.20	-0.656	-0.226	5.328	< 0.001
Attitudes towards retargeting	4.03	1.11	-0.645	-0.051	8.643	< 0.001
Online purchase intentions	4.03	1.00	-0.598	-0.129	9.587	< 0.001
Conversion conditions	4.10	0.91	-0.488	0.471	11.753	< 0.001
Informativeness	4.17	0.93	-0.745	0.795	12.926	< 0.001
Privacy concerns	4.42	1.05	-0.755	0.755	17.413	< 0.001
Intrusiveness	4.01	1.00	-0.554	0.152	9.236	< 0.001
Website design	4.44	1.13	-0.583	1.027	18.344	< 0.001
Online review attitudes	4.29	0.98	-0.250	0.157	15.611	< 0.001
Online review quality	4.30	0.71	-1.135	1.164	20.084	< 0.001
E-trust	4.27	0.99	-0.569	1.195	13.977	< 0.001
E-reputation	4.40	0.96	-0.771	0.993	16.983	< 0.001

This table includes measures of central tendency, variability and the shape of the distribution for each construct, as well as t-test results that assess whether the mean responses significantly differ from the scale's neutral midpoint of 3.5. All constructs were evaluated on a six-point Likert scale, with higher mean values indicating stronger agreement.

The mean scores for the constructs range from 3.86 to 4.44, suggesting generally favourable responses across different aspects of online marketing and digital presence, with all means above the 3.5 threshold, the majority being above 4.0. This indicates that all factors are statistically significant and appropriate for further analysis. Notably, the highest mean value was recorded for website design, which suggests this study's sample perceived their preferred online retailer websites provide in-depth information about their variety of products, make transactions easy to process, do not waste their time and provide sufficient personalisation. However, in relation to remarketing and retargeting strategies and online purchase intentions, the focus of this study, the findings are not promising for online retailers who employ these strategies. Specifically, a low mean score was recorded for online purchase intentions (mean = 4.03), which is the same value associated with the sample's attitudes towards retargeting strategies. It is crucial to clarify the meaning of online purchase intentions in this study. When considering the items (refer to Annexure A), the findings suggest that the respondents did not have a strong intention to buy products they initially searched for, which were then readvertised on websites, social media and email reminders. A bigger problem is that the respondents had a less-than-ideal attitude towards remarketing strategies employed by online retailers (mean = 3.86). According to the items (Annexure A), this implies that the sample did not respond positively to seeing emails (remarketing strategy) of products they initially searched for but did not purchase and they did not respond positively nor appreciated this remarketing strategy.

Standard deviations (σ) range from 0.71 to 1.20, illustrating varying degrees of response consensus among participants. A lower standard deviation in online review quality (0.71) indicates more uniform agreement, whereas a higher standard deviation in attitudes towards remarketing (1.20) shows a wider range of responses. Skewness values, predominantly negative, range from -0.705 to -0.250, suggesting a distribution of responses was skewed towards higher agreement (scores of 4 to 6 on the Likert scale). Constructs such as online review attitudes, with skewness closer to zero (-0.250), demonstrate a more symmetric distribution of responses. Kurtosis values vary from -0.226 to 1.195, revealing different distribution shapes among the constructs. For instance, e-trust, with a kurtosis of 1.195, indicates a more leptokurtic distribution, signifying a higher likelihood of extreme responses. The t-values, significantly less than 0.001 for all constructs, underscore that the average responses are significantly different from the neutral

midpoint, particularly highlighted in constructs like online review quality (20.084) and website design (18.344), which suggest strong agreement with the aspects being measured.

In summary, the descriptive statistics illustrate that respondents somewhat endorse the statements related to advanced marketing techniques and trust in digital platforms, as mentioned in Chapter 3 (Williams & Baláž, 2021:1619). The statistically significant t-test results underscore that these views are positively skewed away from neutrality, reflecting an overall positive sentiment towards the constructs under investigation. Given the positive attitudes towards retargeting, organisations should consider increasing their investment in retargeting strategies to capture interest and convert window shoppers into buyers (Marhamat, 2022), focusing on personalised advertisements that reflect the users' previous online behaviours to potentially increase conversion rates (Benitez *et al.*, 2023:1). Additionally, with high scores in website design, companies should leverage this strength by ensuring that their websites remain user-friendly, secure and visually appealing. Further improvements in website functionality, including faster loading times and easier navigation, can enhance user satisfaction and trust, which are crucial for maintaining and growing customer loyalty. These strategies can help capitalise on the positive attitudes towards digital marketing strategies and trust in online platforms, thus driving more effective engagement and conversions in online environments. The findings stemming from the descriptive and t-test statistics analysis lend themselves to several detailed implications and recommendations supplied in Chapter 6.

5.8 Multicollinearity diagnostics

Testing for multicollinearity evaluates the extent of multicollinearity among the independent variables in a regression model using two key metrics: tolerance values and the variance inflation factor (VIF). Multicollinearity arises when independent variables are highly correlated, potentially distorting regression estimates and diminishing the model's reliability (Keith, 2019:226). Tolerance indicates the proportion of a variable's variance not explained by other variables, while VIF quantifies how much a regression coefficient's variance is inflated due to multicollinearity.

For interpretation, tolerance values closer to 1 indicate low multicollinearity, while values approaching 0 suggest potential issues (Hair *et al.*, 2019:118). A tolerance value below 0.1 would be concerning, but all values are above that threshold in this table. Similarly, VIF values above 10 suggest significant multicollinearity, but in this study, all VIF values were below this threshold. The results from the multicollinearity diagnostics are presented in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13: Multicollinearity diagnostics results

Factor	Tolerance	VIF	Factor	Tolerance	VIF
Awareness	0.721	1.388	Intrusiveness	0.784	1.276
Attitudes towards remarketing	0.624	1.602	Website design	0.565	1.770
Attitudes towards retargeting	0.556	1.799	Online review attitudes	0.767	1.304
Online purchase intention	0.591	1.986	Online review quality	0.540	1.852
Conversion conditions	0.381	2.627	E-trust	0.551	1.816
Informativeness	0.505	1.979	E-reputation	0.599	1.669
Privacy concerns	0.764	1.309			

The multicollinearity diagnostics indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern in the regression model, as both the tolerance and VIF values for all variables fall within acceptable ranges. Tolerance values range from 0.505 (for informativeness) to 0.784 (for perceived intrusiveness), suggesting that no variable presents a significant multicollinearity risk. Higher tolerance values, such as those for awareness of advertisements at 0.721 and attitudes towards remarketing at 0.624, indicate that these variables are fairly independent from the others in the model. Similarly, VIF values range from 1.276 (for perceived intrusiveness) to 2.627 (for conversion conditions), all well below the threshold of 10, confirming the absence of multicollinearity.

As such, combined with the positive outcome of the collinearity diagnostics, to determine the nomological validity of the data, correlation analysis had to follow.

5.9 Correlation analysis

This section presents a correlation matrix to assess the nomological validity of the measurement model (Hair *et al.*, 2013a:710). The correlation analysis evaluates the relationships between key variables by examining the strength and direction of these associations. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was calculated for each variable pair, ranging from -1 to +1. A coefficient of +1 indicates a perfect positive relationship, where an increase in one variable results in a proportional increase in the other. Conversely, a value of -1 signifies a perfect negative relationship, meaning an increase in one variable corresponds to a decrease in the other. A value of 0 implies no relationship between the variables. Two-tailed significance tests were conducted to determine the statistical significance of the correlations, with a p -value of less than 0.05 indicating statistical significance, suggesting the relationships are unlikely due to chance. Table 5.14 displays the correlations between the different constructs used in the study. The correlation analysis presented in Table 5.14 highlights the relationships between key variables within the study, using Pearson's correlation coefficients.

Using Pearson's correlation coefficients, the results show several values ranging from moderately strong (± 0.41 to ± 0.60) to strong correlations (± 0.61 to ± 0.80) as classified by Hair *et al.* (2019). However, there were several very weak and weak coefficients that ranged between $r = -0.008$ (ORA $\leftrightarrow$ ATM) on the lower threshold and $r = 0.403$ (WD $\leftrightarrow$ CC) on the higher threshold. These values assisted in evaluating the strength of relationships between variables. Positive correlations indicated that as one variable increases, so does the other, while negative correlations suggested an inverse relationship. Significance levels are marked by * for $p < 0.05$ and ** for $p < 0.01$, ensuring the reliability of these relationships.

Significant findings include the strong positive correlations between informativeness and conversion conditions ($r = 0.636$, $p < 0.01$) and online purchase intentions and conversion conditions ($r = 0.634$, $p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that informative remarketing and retargeting advertising strategies are highly related to consumers' conversion conditions, where the latter is then highly correlated with online purchase intent, all of which aligns with prior findings (Sesar *et al.*, 2022). Moderately strong relationships were recorded between 18 pairs of factors, with values ranging from $r = 0.403$ (WD $\leftrightarrow$ CC) to $r = 0.588$ *CC $\leftrightarrow$ ATT), with most other inter-factor relationships being weaker, yet significant.

Table 5.14: Correlation analysis results

Factors	AW	ATM	ATT	PI	CC	IF	PC	ITR	WD	ORA	ORQ	ETR
Awareness (AW)	1											
Attitudes towards remarketing (ATM)	0.106	1										
Attitudes towards retargeting (ATT)	0.252**	0.450**	1									
Online purchase intention (PI)	0.292**	0.461**	0.509**	1								
Conversion conditions (CC)	0.351**	0.508**	0.588**	0.634**	1							
Informativeness (IF)	0.341**	0.434**	0.492**	0.561**	0.636**	1						
Privacy concerns (PC)	0.235**	0.105	0.211**	0.135*	0.260**	0.269**	1					
Intrusiveness (ITR)	0.186**	0.126*	0.040	0.174**	0.208**	0.144**	0.304**	1				
Website design (WD)	0.370**	0.159**	0.317**	0.279**	0.403**	0.373**	0.344**	0.316**	1			
Online review attitudes (ORA)	0.334**	-0.008	0.066	0.066	0.188**	0.164**	0.238**	0.091	0.299**	1		
Online review quality (ORQ)	0.253**	0.284**	0.358**	0.386**	0.419**	0.355**	0.204**	0.305**	0.521**	0.298**	1	
E-trust (ETR)	0.365**	0.232**	0.343**	0.348**	0.441**	0.412**	0.317**	0.269**	0.517**	0.310**	0.523**	1
E-reputation (REP)	0.347**	0.046	0.273**	0.259**	0.389**	0.293**	0.312**	0.256**	0.439**	0.325**	0.467**	0.494**
Note: * $p < 0.05$ and ** $p < 0.01$												

However, some relationships were non-significant. For example, privacy concerns and attitudes towards remarketing ($r = 0.105$, $p = 0.058$) did not show a strong association. This suggests that privacy concerns may not heavily influence consumer attitudes towards remarketing, potentially because consumers perceive remarketing as less intrusive or believe that the benefits outweigh their concerns (Dehling *et al.*, 2019). Similarly, the lack of significant correlation between perceived intrusiveness and attitudes towards retargeting ($r = 0.040$, $p = 0.471$) indicates that intrusiveness is not a major factor shaping consumer attitudes, which could be explained by increasing consumer familiarity with these practices as part of the online shopping experience (Riedel *et al.*, 2024).

Furthermore, attitudes towards remarketing did not significantly correlate with e-reputation ($r = 0.046$, $p = 0.406$). This suggests that while remarketing may drive engagement, it may not directly affect how consumers view a brand's overall reputation. Instead, factors like personal experience or customer satisfaction may play a more significant role in shaping brand perception, as supported by other studies (Lee & Kwon, 2021; Lu & Chen, 2020:113).

In summary, the correlation analysis reveals strong positive relationships between awareness, website design, remarketing attitudes and online purchase intentions, suggesting that well-executed online marketing strategies can significantly impact consumer engagement and purchase behaviour. Non-significant correlations, particularly related to privacy concerns and intrusiveness, suggest that these factors may not pose substantial barriers to consumer engagement in the context of this study. While there were a few non-significant relationships between some factor pairs, the nomological validity was established based on an HTMT analysis (refer to Section 5.11.2) in combination with the absence of collinearity concerns according to the previous section.

5.10 Hypotheses testing

Hypotheses are testable ideas that haven't been proven yet and are used to explain something based on data. According to Zikmund and Babin (2016:275), a hypothesis is a guess about a situation. There are two types:

A null hypothesis (H_0) says the variables have no relationship (Hair *et al.*, 2013:67).

An alternative hypothesis (H_a) says there is a relationship or difference between the variables (Burns & Bush, 2014:357).

When the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative accepted, it often leads to changes in opinions regarding the hypothesised relationship and subsequent actions (Malhotra, 2015:336). Hypothesis testing was conducted in this study to evaluate the relationships between the thirteen

factors outlined in the proposed model according to Figure 5.2 (also refer to Section 3.7, Figure 3.4), which were formulated after a thorough literature investigation. Using SEM in AMOS Version 28, the path coefficients were examined to test the significance of these relationships.

This study reported the testing outcomes at the 95 and 99 percent levels, where hypotheses were accepted or rejected in instances where $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$. The following (alternative) hypotheses were tested in reported in the succeeding sections:

- H1: South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing have a significant direct influence on their online purchase intentions.
- H2: South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting have a significant direct influence on their online purchase intentions.
- H3: Conversion conditions South African consumers associate with remarketing and retargeting have a significant direct influence on their online purchase intentions.
- H4a: South African consumers' awareness of remarketing and retargeting have a significant direct influence on their attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H4b: South African consumers' awareness of remarketing and retargeting have a significant direct influence on their attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H5a: The informativeness of remarketing and retargeting has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H5b: The informativeness of remarketing and retargeting has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H5c: Privacy concerns associated with online shopping have a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H5d: Privacy concerns associated with online shopping have a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H5e: The perceived intrusiveness of remarketing and retargeting have a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H5f: The perceived intrusiveness of remarketing and retargeting have a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H6a: Online retailers' website design has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H6b: Online retailers' website design has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.

- H6c: South African consumers' attitudes towards online product reviews have a significant direct influence on their remarketing strategy attitudes.
- H6d: South African consumers' attitudes towards online product reviews have a significant direct influence on their retargeting strategy attitudes.
- H6e: The quality of online product reviews has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H6f: The quality of online product reviews has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H6g: Online retailer trust has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H6h: Online retailer trust has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H6i: Online retailer reputation has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing strategies.
- H6j: Online retailer reputation has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting strategies.
- H7a: Online retailers' website design has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' online purchase intentions.
- H7b: South African consumers' attitudes towards online product reviews have a significant direct influence on their online purchase intentions.
- H7c: The quality of online product reviews has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' online purchase intentions.
- H7d: Online retailer trust has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' online purchase intentions.
- H7e: Online retailer reputation has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' online purchase intentions.
- H8: South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions are a 13-factor structure comprising attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, online purchase intentions, awareness, conversion conditions, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, website design, online review attitudes, online review quality, online retailer reputation and trust.

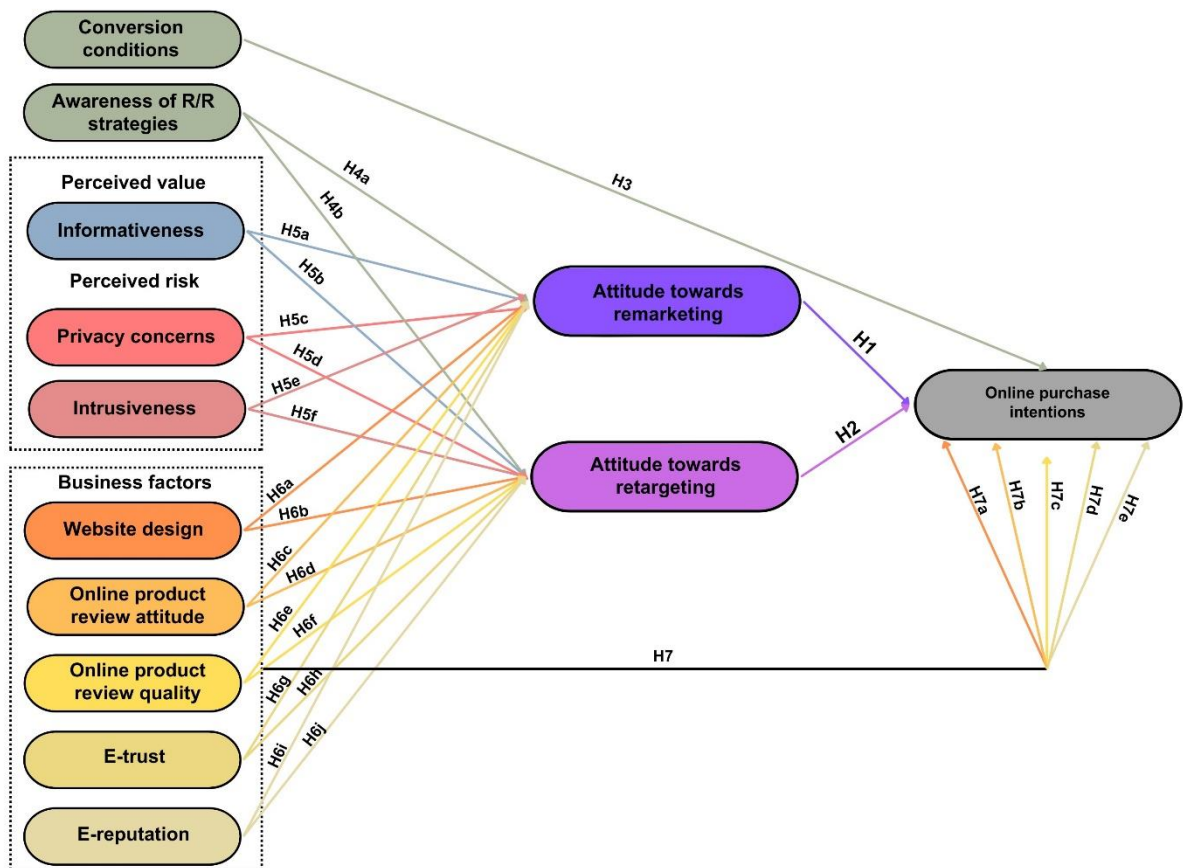


Figure 5.2: Proposed model

The succeeding section discusses the SEM approach used to test the hypotheses outlined above, which addressed the study's objectives in relation to South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies and their intention to make online purchases.

5.11 Structural equation modelling

This section addresses the final two empirical objectives outlined in Section 1.4.2, alongside the stated hypotheses. The following section then outlines the process for conducting SEM, covering both the construction and evaluation of the measurement and structural models. SEM was employed to test the relationships between the factors influencing South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies and their online purchase intentions. The results aimed to confirm or refute the suggestion that the latter is a 13-factor model.

5.11.1 Measurement model specification

As suggested, the purpose of EFA is to validate the factor structure while relying on theoretical considerations in this study, having been covered in Chapter 3. Keith (2019:348) notes that CFA is suitable for testing specific hypotheses or theories about the relationships among variables.

Furthermore, this procedure was appropriate since, up to this point in the analysis, the researcher of this study had a clear expectation of how the variables are related (Kumar *et al.*, 2018:505; Malhotra, 2020:727) and sought, via a measurement model, to confirm that the data fits this expected structure. As such, the confirmed 55-item, 13-factor structure concluded in Section 5.6, having not eliminated any other items based on subsequent analysis (Sections 5.7 to 5.9), served as the input for the measurement model to be specified.

After constructing the measurement model, it was immediately evident that its model fit and validity were a concern, specifically due to some items within the model. For this reason, seven items were removed, namely PI3, CC3 and 6, PC5, WD5 and ORA5 and 6. The first specified measurement model and the table showing the estimates for the removed items are shown in Annexure D.

The updated measurement model is illustrated in Figure 5.3 and its estimates are outlined in Table 5.15.

This final CFA resulted in a measurement model comprising 13 latent or unobserved factors with 36 indicators, namely awareness (AW) (three indicators), attitudes towards remarketing (ATM) (three indicators), attitudes towards retargeting (ATT) (three indicators), online purchase intentions (PI) (three indicators), conversion conditions (CC) (four indicators), informativeness (IF) (four indicators), privacy concerns (PC) (four indicators), perceived intrusiveness (ITR) (five indicators), website design (WD) (four indicators), online review attitudes (ORA) (three indicators), online review quality (ORQ) (six indicators), e-trust (ETR) (three indicators) and e-reputation (REP) (three indicators). These latent constructs reflect the main factors influencing consumers' remarketing and retargeting attitudes and their online purchase intentions in the context of online shopping, particularly when exposed to remarketing and retargeting strategies. Each construct is measured using multiple observed variables (indicators), as outlined in Table 5.2, to ensure comprehensive coverage of the constructs' underlying dimensions.

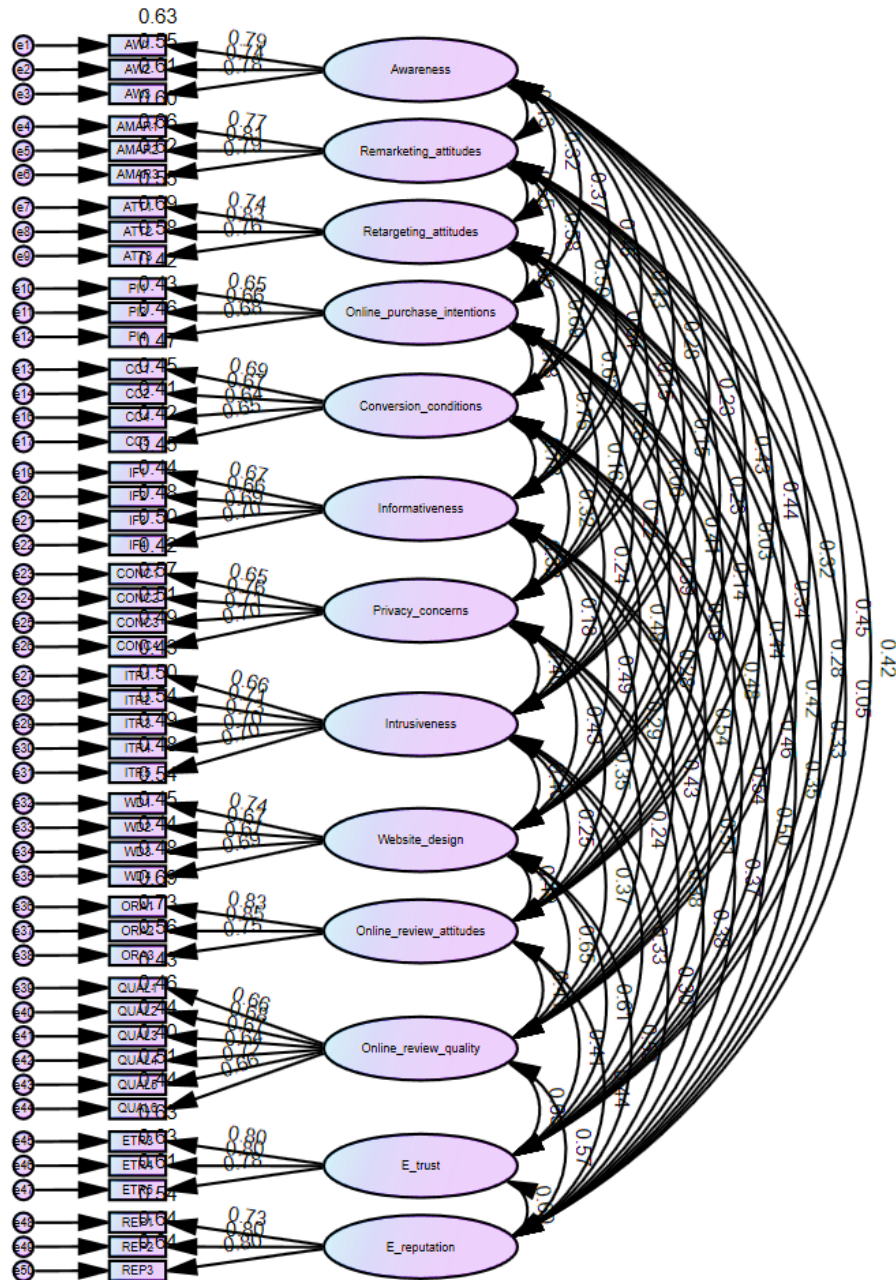


Figure 5.3: Specified 13-factor measurement model

The measurement model was constructed using the maximum-likelihood method via AMOS Graphics version 28. The 13-factor model, now with 36 items, was specified, fixing the first loading on each latent factor at 1.0. The model generated 1224 distinct sample moments and 223 parameters to estimate, resulting in 1001 degrees of freedom due to an overestimated model. The chi-square value was 1401.091, which was statistically significant ($p = 0.000$). The chi-square forms the basis for most goodness-of-fit indices since it assesses the accuracy and statistical significance of the proposed theoretical structure (Hair *et al.*, 2019). However, a statistically

significant chi-square may indicate poor model fit due to its sensitivity to sample size and the number of observed variables (Malhotra *et al.*, 2017).

Consequently, alternative indices were computed to confirm the hypothesised model's fit, comprising the comparative-fit index (CFI), incremental-fit index (IFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Confirmation of model fit relies on indices above 0.90 for the CFI, IFI and TLI and values below 0.08 for the SRMR and RMSEA (Hair *et al.*, 2019). The model was examined for problematic estimates, such as standardised factor loadings above 1.0 or below -1.0 and negative error variance values. To assess the strength of the measurement model, standardised regression weights (SE) or factor loadings and error variances were evaluated. The factor loadings, which indicate how well each indicator represents its corresponding construct, were consistently above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7, demonstrating good construct representation. The results are outlined in Table 5.15 and subsequently discussed.

Table 5.15: Measurement model estimates

Latent factors	Coded indicators	Factor loadings (SE)	Error variance
Awareness	AW1	0.793	0.629
	AW2	0.742	0.551
	AW3	0.780	0.608
Attitudes towards remarketing	ATM1	0.773	0.598
	ATM2	0.815	0.664
	ATM3	0.789	0.623
Attitudes towards retargeting	ATT1	0.739	0.546
	ATT2	0.832	0.692
	ATT3	0.764	0.584
Online purchase intentions	PI1	0.649	0.421
	PI2	0.659	0.434
	PI4	0.678	0.460
Conversion conditions	CC1	0.687	0.472
	CC2	0.670	0.448
	CC4	0.641	0.411
Informativeness	CC5	0.649	0.421
	IF1	0.672	0.452
	IF2	0.663	0.439
Privacy concerns	IF3	0.694	0.482
	IF4	0.704	0.495
	PC1	0.649	0.422
	PC2	0.756	0.571
	PC3	0.715	0.511
	PC4	0.702	0.493

Table 5.15: Measurement model estimates (continued...)

Latent factors	Coded indicators	Factor loadings (SE)	Error variance
Awareness	AW1	0.793	0.629
	AW2	0.742	0.551
	AW3	0.780	0.608
Intrusiveness	ITR1	0.657	0.432
	ITR2	0.710	0.504
	ITR3	0.734	0.539
	ITR4	0.702	0.492
	ITR5	0.695	0.483
Website design	WD1	0.738	0.545
	WD2	0.674	0.454
	WD3	0.665	0.443
	WD4	0.695	0.483
Online review attitudes	ORA1	0.833	0.694
	ORA2	0.854	0.729
	ORA3	0.751	0.564
Online review quality	ORQ1	0.656	0.430
	ORQ2	0.682	0.465
	ORQ3	0.666	0.443
	ORQ4	0.635	0.404
	ORQ5	0.715	0.512
	ORQ6	0.661	0.437
E-trust	ERT3	0.797	0.635
	ETR4	0.796	0.634
	ETR5	0.779	0.607
E-reputation	REP1	0.732	0.536
	REP2	0.802	0.643
	REP3	0.800	0.641

Notes: ATM is denoted as AMAR; PC is denoted as CONC, ORQ denoted as QUAL in the model

Fit indices: CFI (0.939), IFI (0.940), TLI (0.931), SRMR (0.0420), RMSEA (0.035)

The model returned acceptable index values for CFI (0.939), IFI (0.940), TLI (0.931), SRMR (0.0420), RMSEA (0.035), thereby confirming the model's fit. Overall, the factor loadings and error variances suggest that the model demonstrates good reliability and validity, with the indicators providing strong and consistent measures of the underlying constructs. This supports the overall fit and robustness of the measurement model. The following section reports the model's reliability and validity.

Table 5.16: Measurement model validity and reliability

	CR	AVE	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	AW	ATM	ATT	PI	CC	IF	PC	ITR	WD	ORA	ORQ	ETR
AW	0.82	0.596	0.722												
ATM	0.84	0.628	0.793	0.132											
ATT	0.82	0.608	0.779	0.322**	0.550**										
PI	0.70	0.438	0.622	0.374**	0.583**	0.616**									
CC	0.76	0.438	0.662	0.449**	0.586**	0.692**	0.784**								
IF	0.78	0.467	0.683	0.430**	0.537**	0.615**	0.758**	0.775**							
PC	0.80	0.499	0.707	0.278**	0.154*	0.228**	0.162*	0.318**	0.318**						
ITR	0.83	0.490	0.700	0.231*	0.154*	0.058	0.220**	0.240**	0.179*	0.398**					
WD	0.79	0.481	0.694	0.427**	0.231**	0.406**	0.394**	0.485**	0.492**	0.426**	0.398**				
ORA	0.85	0.662	0.814	0.436**	0.026	0.136*	0.193**	0.281**	0.293**	0.352**	0.255**	0.492**			
ORQ	0.83	0.448	0.670	0.317**	0.336**	0.436**	0.478**	0.540**	0.435**	0.238**	0.368**	0.649**	0.409**		
ETR	0.83	0.625	0.791	0.448**	0.277**	0.416**	0.458**	0.543**	0.512**	0.377**	0.327**	0.609**	0.414**	0.630**	
REP	0.82	0.607	0.779	0.424**	0.052	0.333**	0.350**	0.498**	0.366**	0.379**	0.304**	0.534**	0.440**	0.567**	0.605**

Note: * $p < 0.05$ and ** $p < 0.01$

Awareness (AW), Attitudes towards remarketing (ATM), Attitudes towards retargeting (ATT), Online purchase intention (PI), Conversion conditions (CC), Informativeness (IF), Privacy concerns (PC), Intrusiveness (ITR), Website design (WD), Online review attitudes (ORA), Online review quality (ORQ), E-trust (ETR), E-reputation (REP)

Table 5.17: Measurement model HTMT values

	AW	ATM	ATT	PI	CC	IF	PC	ITR	WD	ORA	ORQ	ETR
AW												
ATM	0.105											
ATT	0.251	0.449										
PI	0.282	0.449	0.466									
CC	0.358	0.478	0.549	0.580								
IF	0.348	0.431	0.493	0.557	0.607							
PC	0.223	0.123	0.192	0.114	0.258	0.250						
ITR	0.187	0.126	0.042	0.166	0.195	0.141	0.321					
WD	0.340	0.185	0.321	0.287	0.384	0.384	0.336	0.316				
ORA	0.364	0.023	0.106	0.143	0.230	0.238	0.285	0.209	0.402			
ORQ	0.252	0.284	0.359	0.363	0.348	0.349	0.198	0.305	0.524	0.344		
ETR	0.365	0.232	0.344	0.347	0.440	0.408	0.309	0.269	0.492	0.353	0.523	
REP	0.347	0.045	0.274	0.261	0.400	0.293	0.308	0.256	0.435	0.362	0.468	0.497
Awareness (AW), Attitudes towards remarketing (ATM), Attitudes towards retargeting (ATT), Online purchase intention (PI), Conversion conditions (CC), Informativeness (IF), Privacy concerns (PC), Intrusiveness (ITR), Website design (WD), Online review attitudes (ORA), Online review quality (ORQ), E-trust (ETR), E-reputation (REP)												

5.11.2 Reliability and validity of the measurement model

In assessing the reliability and validity of the measurement model, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), the AVE squared ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$) and heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlation (HTMT) values were used to assess the internal consistency, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the factors used in the model. Composite reliability (CR) values greater than 0.70 indicate good internal consistency, while AVE values above 0.50 demonstrate adequate convergent validity. Fornell and Larcker (1981) have a more liberal view and argue that convergent validity is adequate when CR is larger than 0.6 but the AVE is above 0.40. Discriminant validity requires that the $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ values exceed the correlation estimates between the latent factors (Hair *et al.*, 2019) or that the HTMT values are significantly less than 1.0. According to Henseler *et al.* (2016), the thresholds for strict and liberal discriminant validity are 0.850 and 0.900, respectively. The findings are illustrated in Table 5.16, with the HTMT results in Table 5.17.

All AVE values met the suggested thresholds (Fornwell & Larcker, 1981) as shown in Table 5-16. However, since the $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ values for a few of the latent pairs were smaller than its correlation with other factors, further analysis was required to conclude discriminant validity. This required calculating the HTMT values (Henseler *et al.*, 2016). Based on the measurement model fit indices, the CR, AVE, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ followed by the HTMT analysis, this model was considered to show composite reliability and convergent and discriminant validity. Accordingly, the structural model was drafted to test the hypotheses using path analysis.

5.11.3 Structural model

The first hypothesised model was constructed and 26 paths were evaluated whereby their statistical significance was reported at the 95 and 99 percent levels upon which the alternative hypotheses were accepted or rejected. Table 5.18 shows the alternative hypotheses and their coinciding paths that were tested, followed by the outcome in terms of the standardised beta coefficient (β), standard error (SE) of estimate and p-values, concluding with the decision.

This proposed model was evaluated for its rigour and returned acceptable values [$\chi^2 = 1454.877$, $df = 1009$, $p = 0.000$]; (CFI:0.932, IFI:0.933, TLI:0.924, SRMR: 0.0433, RMSEA:0.037)]. Although, of the 26 paths tested in the model, only 9 paths were found to be statistically significant at various levels of significance ($p < 0.01$, $p < 0.05$) and therefore alternative H3, H5a, H5b, H5f, H6c, H6d, H6e, H6f and H6i were accepted and the null hypotheses, suggesting no association between the factors, were rejected. These findings are illustrated in the output diagram shown in Figure 5.4.

Table 5.18: Hypotheses testing results

H (alt.)	Path	Standardised (β)	SE	p-value	Decision
H1	ATM $\rightarrow$ PI	0.109	0.072	0.201	Reject
H2	ATT $\rightarrow$ PI	0.049	0.079	0.583	Reject
H3	CC $\rightarrow$ PI	0.761	0.144	0.000**	Accept
H4a	AW $\rightarrow$ ATM	-0.065	0.082	0.406	Reject
H4b	AW $\rightarrow$ ATT	0.058	0.074	0.428	Reject
H5a	IF $\rightarrow$ ATM	0.691	0.143	0.000**	Accept
H5b	IF $\rightarrow$ ATT	0.620	0.127	0.000**	Accept
H5c	PC $\rightarrow$ ATM	0.062	0.100	0.427	Reject
H5d	PC $\rightarrow$ ATT	0.074	0.090	0.316	Reject
H5e	ITR $\rightarrow$ ATM	0.069	0.086	0.333	Reject
H5f	ITR $\rightarrow$ ATT	-0.151	0.078	0.027*	Accept
H6a	WD $\rightarrow$ ATM	-0.165	0.145	0.130	Reject
H6b	WD $\rightarrow$ ATT	-0.011	0.129	0.915	Reject
H6c	ORA $\rightarrow$ ATM	-0.149	0.089	0.047*	Accept
H6d	ORA $\rightarrow$ ATT	-0.187	0.080	0.009**	Accept
H6e	ORQ $\rightarrow$ ATM	0.351	0.172	0.001**	Accept
H6f	ORQ $\rightarrow$ ATT	0.289	0.152	0.004**	Accept
H6g	ETR $\rightarrow$ ATM	-0.011	0.105	0.910	Reject
H6h	ETR $\rightarrow$ ATT	-0.041	0.091	0.668	Reject
H6i	REP $\rightarrow$ ATM	-0.260	0.114	0.004**	Accept
H6j	REP $\rightarrow$ ATT	0.037	0.102	0.661	Reject
H7a	WD $\rightarrow$ PI	-0.038	0.114	0.709	Reject
H7b	ORA $\rightarrow$ PI	-0.006	0.073	0.932	Reject
H7c	ORQ $\rightarrow$ PI	0.052	0.137	0.612	Reject
H7d	ETR $\rightarrow$ PI	0.026	0.094	0.791	Reject
H7e	REP $\rightarrow$ PI	-0.086	0.095	0.382	Reject
Note: * $p < 0.05$ and ** $p < 0.01$ Awareness (AW), Attitudes towards remarketing (ATM), Attitudes towards retargeting (ATT), Online purchase intention (PI), Conversion conditions (CC), Informativeness (IF), Privacy concerns (PC), Intrusiveness (ITR), Website design (WD), Online review attitudes (ORA), Online review quality (ORQ), E-trust (ETR), E-reputation (REP)					

For this initial analysis, it was evident that conversion conditions had a significant influence on South African consumers' online purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.761$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, in reporting the factors that impacted remarketing and retargeting attitudes independently; intrusiveness was a significant predictor of consumers' retargeting attitudes ($\beta = -0.151$, $p = 0.027$, $p < 0.05$), whereas e-reputation had the same importance but for remarketing attitudes ($\beta = -0.260$, $p = 0.004$, $p < 0.01$). Three factors had a significant direct influence on remarketing and retargeting attitudes, namely informativeness [(IF $\rightarrow$ ATM: ($\beta = 0.691$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.01$); IF $\rightarrow$ ATT ($\beta = 0.620$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.01$)], online review attitudes, being negatively associated [(ORA $\rightarrow$ ATM: ($\beta = -0.149$, $p = 0.047$, $p < 0.05$); ORA $\rightarrow$ ATT ($\beta = -0.187$, $p = 0.009$, $p < 0.01$)] and

online review quality [(ORA → ATM: ($\beta = 0.351$, $p = 0.001$, $p < 0.01$); ORA → ATT ($\beta = 0.289$, $p = 0.004$, $p < 0.01$)).

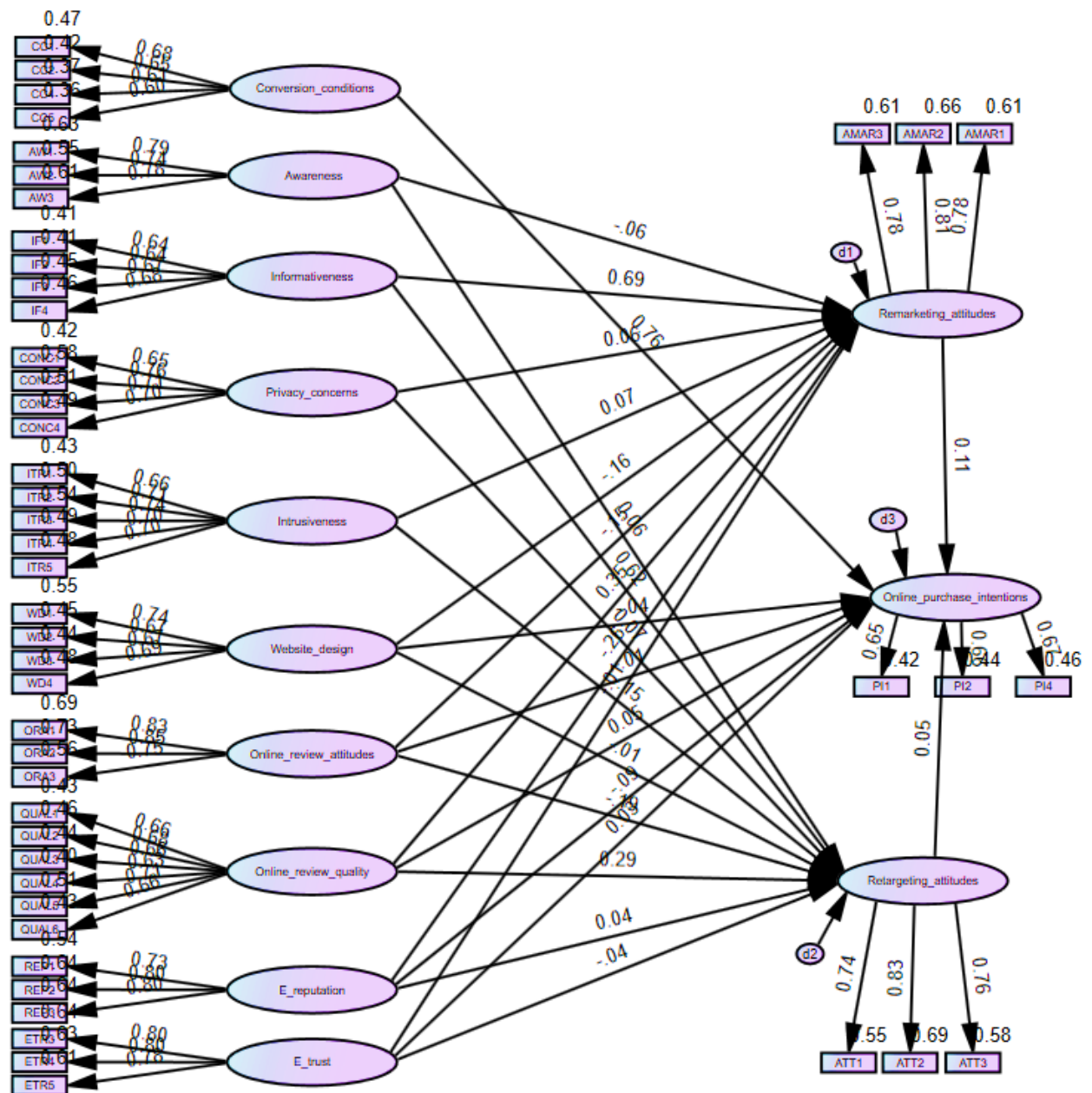


Figure 5.4: Proposed model results

In line with these findings, the researcher suggested Alternative Model 1 (ALT1), where the non-significant paths to the remarketing and retargeting attitudes factors were removed and tested directly on online purchase intentions. This process aimed to refine the model to potentially yield better fit indices and provide a clearer understanding of the dynamics between remarketing, retargeting and online purchase behaviour. This second model also delivered sub-optimal results

in terms of the hypothesis testing outcomes despite showing model fit. The complete model and its estimates are captured under Annexure E. Following these results, the researcher proposed Alternative Model 2 (ALT2) where factors that only produced non-significant direct influences on all three dependent variables were removed, which were awareness, website design and e-trust, suggesting that they had no statistical relevance in this study's context.

Moreover, given the lack of statistical significance of privacy concerns on consumers remarketing and retargeting attitudes, ALT2 investigated its effect on online purchase intentions instead, resulting in the formulation of alternative hypotheses H5h [Privacy concerns associated with online shopping have a significant direct influence on South African consumers' online purchase intentions]. This latter updated hypothesis was accepted, suggesting the major impact of privacy concerns on online purchase intent. Similarly, given its high significance on ATM and ATT, H5g [The informativeness of remarketing and retargeting has a significant direct influence on South African consumers' online purchase intentions] was proposed as an alternative hypothesis, but found to be non-significant, thereby accepting the null H5g. Lastly, both online review factors (ORA and ORQ) and e-reputation had no significant influence on consumers' online purchase intentions contradictory to prior findings (Jha *et al.*, 2023:111; Matriadi, 2021:40; Baldwin, 2023) and were subsequently only assessed for its impact on ATM and ATT. Following the analysis of ALT2, Table 5.19 outlines the significant changes in the hypothesised outcomes compared to the proposed model. In this demonstration, it was vital to retain the original hypotheses but those that were removed are indicated with a strike-through. The coinciding structural model ALT2 and its fit indices can be found under Annexure F.

Table 5.19: Alternative Model 2 results

H (alt.)	Path	Standardised (β)	SE	p-value	Decision
H1	ATM $\rightarrow$ PI	0.121	0.066	0.121	Reject
H2	ATT $\rightarrow$ PI	0.035	0.080	0.612	Reject
H3	CC $\rightarrow$ PI	0.555	0.183	0.003**	Accept
H4a	AW $\rightarrow$ ATM	-0.065	0.082	0.406	Reject
H4b	AW $\rightarrow$ ATT	0.058	0.074	0.428	Reject
H5a	IF $\rightarrow$ ATM	0.647	0.127	0.000**	Accept
H5b	IF $\rightarrow$ ATT	0.643	0.119	0.000**	Accept
ALT2 (H5g)	IF $\rightarrow$ PI	0.244	0.256	0.237	Reject
~~H5c~~	~~PC $\rightarrow$ ATM~~	~~0.062~~	~~0.100~~	~~0.427~~	~~Reject~~
~~H5d~~	~~PC $\rightarrow$ ATT~~	~~0.074~~	~~0.090~~	~~0.316~~	~~Reject~~
ALT2 (H5h)	PC $\rightarrow$ PI	-0.127	0.070	0.050*	Accept
H5e	ITR $\rightarrow$ ATM	0.061	0.077	0.339	Reject
H5f	ITR $\rightarrow$ ATT	-0.127	0.071	0.040*	Accept
~~H6a~~	~~WD $\rightarrow$ ATM~~	~~-0.165~~	~~0.145~~	~~0.130~~	~~Reject~~
~~H6b~~	~~WD $\rightarrow$ ATT~~	~~-0.011~~	~~0.129~~	~~0.915~~	~~Reject~~

Table 5.19: Alternative Model 2 results (continued...)

H (alt.)	Path	Standardised (β)	SE	p-value	Decision
H6c	ORA $\rightarrow$ ATM	-0.183	0.081	0.007**	Accept
H6d	ORA $\rightarrow$ ATT	-0.160	0.073	0.014*	Accept
H6e	ORQ $\rightarrow$ ATM	0.270	0.139	0.002**	Accept
H6f	ORQ $\rightarrow$ ATT	0.240	0.126	0.003**	Accept
H6g	ETR $\rightarrow$ ATM	-0.011	0.105	0.910	Reject
H6h	ETR $\rightarrow$ ATT	-0.041	0.091	0.668	Reject
H6i	REP $\rightarrow$ ATM	-0.278	0.095	0.000**	Accept
H6j	REP $\rightarrow$ ATT	0.060	0.083	0.429	Reject
H7a	WD $\rightarrow$ PI	-0.038	0.114	0.709	Reject
H7b	ORA $\rightarrow$ PI	-0.006	0.073	0.932	Reject
H7c	ORQ $\rightarrow$ PI	0.052	0.137	0.612	Reject
H7d	ETR $\rightarrow$ PI	0.026	0.094	0.791	Reject
H7e	REP $\rightarrow$ PI	-0.086	0.095	0.382	Reject
Note: *$p < 0.05$ and **$p < 0.01$ ~~Not retested~~, deemed irrelevant to this study's context. Awareness (AW), Attitudes towards remarketing (ATM), Attitudes towards retargeting (ATT), Online purchase intention (PI), Conversion conditions (CC), Informativeness (IF), Privacy concerns (PC), Intrusiveness (ITR), Website design (WD), Online review attitudes (ORA), Online review quality (ORQ), E-trust (ETR), E-reputation (REP)					

The chi-square statistic for this ALT2 was significant ($\chi^2 = 876.125$, $df = 629$, $p = 0.000$). The model presented strong overall fit [$\chi^2 = 1454.877$, $df = 1009$, $p = 0.000$]; (CFI:0.949, IFI:0.950, TLI:0.950, SRMR: 0.0426, RMSEA:0.035)]. Based on the path analysis ten hypotheses could be rejected, namely H3, H5a, H5b, H5f, H5h, H6c, H6d, H6e, H6f and H6i. However, the researcher aimed to produce a statistically significant model with targeted implications and valuable recommendations, regardless of being slightly more condensed. As such, the final model used in this study is an adapted version of the TPB, where purchase intentions (PI) were modelled to run parallel to attitudes rather than being a direct consequence of attitudes, as in traditional TPB applications. In the final model analysis, the focus remained on evaluating the key predictors of attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, as well as their influence on online purchase intentions. The goal was to refine the model to fit the data more effectively by examining only statistically significant paths. The final model is presented in Figure 5.5 and its statistics in Table 5.20, serving as the contrasts to Figure 5.4 (the proposed model) and Table 5.18, which outlines the result of the intended framework as suggested by the literature investigation (Chapter 3).

It must be noted that, given the construction of ALT1, ALT2 and the final model, the alternative H8 is rejected which means that South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions is not a 13-factor structure comprising attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, online purchase intentions, awareness, conversion conditions, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, web design, online review attitudes, online review quality, online retailer reputation and trust. Instead, the null H8 is accepted, as in

this study's context, it is a 10-factor framework comprising attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, online purchase intentions, conversion conditions, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, online review attitudes, online review quality and online retailer reputation.

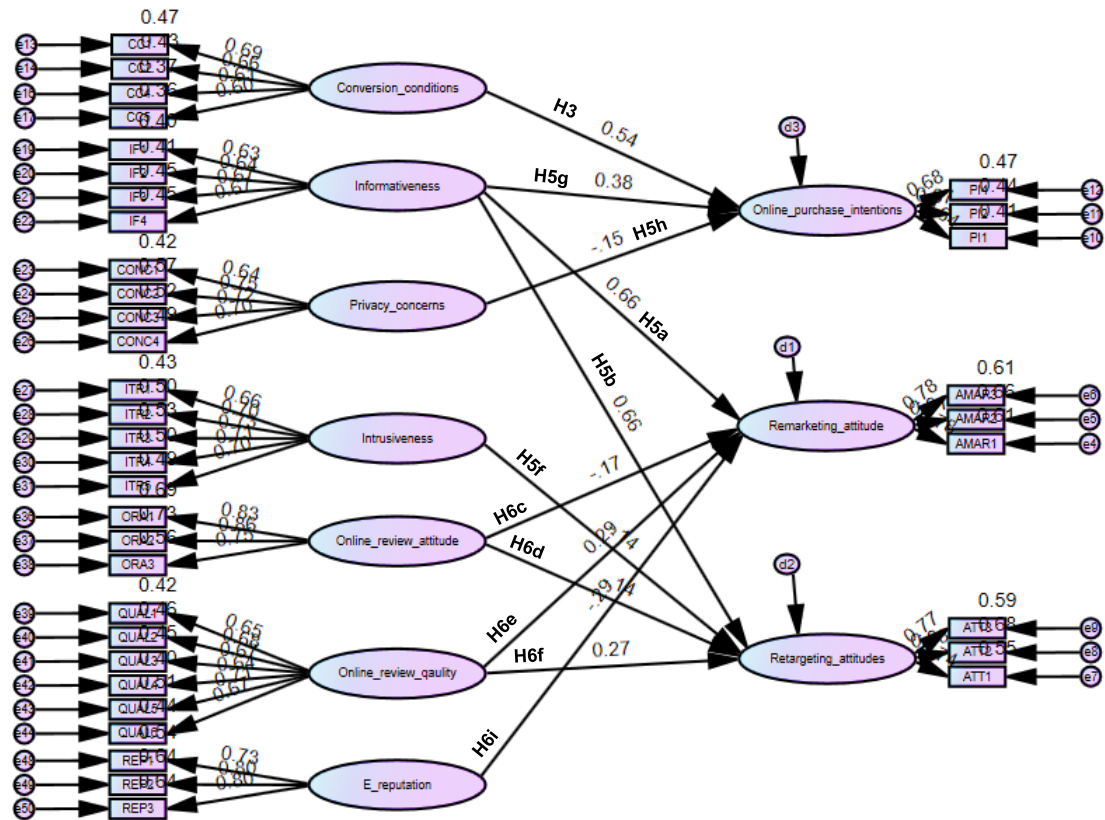


Figure 5.5: Model of the factors influencing South African consumers' remarketing and retargeting attitudes and their online purchase intentions

Despite the significant chi-square result ($\chi^2 = 880.028$, $df = 633$, $p = 0.000$), the alternative indices suggest an acceptable model fit [(CFI:0.949, IFI:0.950, TLI:0.944, SRMR: 0.0429, RMSEA:0.035)]. These indices indicate minimal discrepancies between observed and predicted data; overall, the model fits well. Table 5.20 shows the alternative hypotheses and their coinciding paths that were tested, followed by the outcome in terms of the standardised beta coefficient (β), standard error (SE) of estimate and p-values, concluding with the decision.

All the null hypotheses for those indicated in Table 5.20 were rejected and the alternatives were accepted. In the context of this investigation, this means that the conversion conditions South African consumers associate with remarketing and retargeting have a significant direct influence on their online purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.539$, $p = 0.005$, $p < 0.01$), which was the strongest predictor of online purchase intentions. In other words, consumers are far more likely

to make online purchases if the remarketing/retargeting advertisements are personalised, relevant, contain promotional codes, are from trusted brands and are fun/entertaining.

Table 5.20: Final model path analysis results

H (alt.)	Path	Standardised (β)	SE	p-value	Decision
H3	CC $\rightarrow$ PI	0.539	0.184	0.005**	Accept
H5a	IF $\rightarrow$ ATM	0.663	0.129	0.000**	Accept
H5b	IF $\rightarrow$ ATT	0.657	0.120	0.000**	Accept
H5f	ITR $\rightarrow$ ATT	-0.141	0.070	0.021*	Accept
H5g	IF $\rightarrow$ PI	0.378	0.232	0.044*	Accept
H5h	PC $\rightarrow$ PI	-0.147	0.068	0.021*	Accept
H6c	ORA $\rightarrow$ ATM	-0.171	0.080	0.011*	Accept
H6d	ORA $\rightarrow$ ATT	-0.142	0.070	0.023*	Accept
H6e	ORQ $\rightarrow$ ATM	0.288	0.135	0.000**	Accept
H6f	ORQ $\rightarrow$ ATT	0.266	0.115	0.000**	Accept
H6i	REP $\rightarrow$ ATM	-0.291	0.093	0.000**	Accept
Note: * $p < 0.05$ and ** $p < 0.01$ Awareness (AW), Attitudes towards remarketing (ATM), Attitudes towards retargeting (ATT), Online purchase intention (PI), Conversion conditions (CC), Informativeness (IF), Privacy concerns (PC), Intrusiveness (ITR), Website design (WD), Online review attitudes (ORA), Online review quality (ORQ), E-trust (ETR), E-reputation (REP)					

Consumers are more likely to convert when advertisements are tailored to their preferences, incorporate promotional codes and come from brands that they trust. These elements of personalisation and trust resonate strongly with South African consumers, as supported by Abirami and Rajan (2022), who demonstrate the importance of behavioural retargeting in purchase behaviour and Farman *et al.* (2020), who noted that relevant and fun advertisements significantly enhance consumer engagement. Marketers should prioritise creating personalised and interactive remarketing campaigns that include promotional offers and align with consumer trust factors. These campaigns must be tailored to reflect brand trustworthiness, which Arli (2024) indicates is crucial for consumer acceptance of online advertisements, especially when dealing with privacy concerns. Furthermore, the informativeness ($\beta = 0.378$, $p = 0.044$, $p < 0.05$) of remarketing and retargeting material and the privacy concerns ($\beta = -0.147$, $p = 0.021$, $p < 0.05$) consumers had with shopping online also directly influenced their online purchase intentions.

This suggests that South African consumers perceive remarketing/retargeting advertisements to be very informative and this results in an increase in their online purchase intentions. It is evident, however, that privacy concerns remain a limitation since it had an adverse influence on consumers' online purchase intentions. Rehman *et al.* (2020) explored how privacy concerns shape consumer behaviour in digital contexts, noting that intrusive advertisements can harm trust and reduce purchase intent. Similarly, Lim *et al.* (2023) demonstrate that excessive data collection in personalised advertising creates negative perceptions, further discouraging purchases. To

mitigate privacy concerns, organisations should adopt transparent data management practices, giving consumers control over their data and ensuring that privacy policies are clear. This approach, supported by Arli (2024), encourages consumers to feel secure and confident when interacting with remarketing advertisements, ultimately leading to higher conversion rates.

As discussed, to ensure appropriate conclusions are drawn from these findings, remarketing refers to the strategy of sending email and SMS campaigns to visitors who have browsed a specific website and abandoned their cart or search, provided the visitor volunteered their contact information. Conversely, retargeting refers to online advertisement placement or display advertisements targeting users who have interacted with a particular website in specific ways without purchasing, commonly across social and digital media platforms the visitor frequents.

In line with the above, informativeness ($\beta = 0.663$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.01$), online review attitudes ($\beta = -0.171$, $p = 0.011$, $p < 0.05$) and quality ($\beta = 0.288$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.01$), as well as e-reputation ($\beta = -0.291$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.01$) had statistically significant direct influences on South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing. This suggests that South African consumers perceived remarketing advertisements to be very informative and this results in their positive attitudes towards remarketing. Informativeness has consistently been shown to enhance consumer engagement with remarketing advertisements, aligning with Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), who emphasise that consumers are more responsive when advertisements provide valuable information. The positive impact of advertisement quality is also supported by Aljabari *et al.* (2023), who found that well-designed remarketing content significantly influences consumers' likelihood to engage with online purchasing activities.

The quality of online reviews, which were abundant in their opinion, was also vital in driving consumers' increased attitudes towards remarketing. This finding is corroborated by Pooja and Upadhyaya (2022), who indicate that high-quality reviews enhance consumer trust and subsequently improve their engagement with online marketing efforts. However, interestingly, South African consumers' online review attitudes had an adverse effect on their remarketing attitudes. This contradiction with prior research may be explained by the relatively low mean score calculated for this factor ($X=3.86$), indicating that the study sample may not place as much trust or weight on online reviews, despite their abundance. Jha *et al.* (2023) also suggest that while reviews are generally seen as positive, their overabundance or inconsistencies may lead to consumer scepticism. Thus, this study's sample does not view online reviews in a positive light, despite being available in abundance online. Moreover, the sample's preferred online stores having had an excellent perceived public image, were highly reputable and provided safe transactional processes, had an adverse effect on their remarketing attitudes. This finding needs further understanding since the sample did not perceive remarketing as intrusive [Table 5.19,

H5e; ($\beta = 0.061$, $p = 0.339$, $p > 0.01$); $X=4.01$] nor associated with being a privacy concern [Table 5-18, H5c; ($\beta = 0.062$, $p = 0.427$, $p > 0.01$)]. This is in contrast to studies by Lim *et al.* (2023), which suggest that, typically, consumers view retargeting advertisements as intrusive when there is a perceived breach of privacy. The higher score in this study ($X=4.01$) suggests that South African consumers may be more tolerant of remarketing advertisements, provided they are not excessively personalised or invasive.

Informativeness had a parallel effect on retargeting attitudes ($\beta = 0.657$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.01$) and was the strongest predictor of consumers remarketing/retargeting attitudes. This also then suggests that South African consumers perceived retargeting advertisements to be very informative and this results in their positive attitude towards retargeting. Similarly, online review quality ($\beta = 0.288$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.01$) had a statistically significant direct influence on South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting. This signified that the quality of online reviews, which were abundant in respondents' opinion, was also vital in enhancing their retargeting attitudes. Fernandes *et al.* (2022) found that detailed, credible online reviews greatly enhance consumer trust and increase the effectiveness of retargeting advertisements. Additionally, Pasharibu and Nurhidayah (2021) note that the quality of reviews and the perceived value of information in advertisements drive positive consumer attitudes towards retargeting. To maximise the effectiveness of retargeting strategies, organisations should ensure that advertisements are informative and backed by high-quality, authentic online reviews.

Regularly monitoring and improving e-reputation through consumer feedback is key to fostering trust and improving retargeting success. Another parallel between remarketing and retargeting attitudes was that consumers' online review attitudes ($\beta = -0.142$, $p = 0.023$, $p < 0.05$) had an adverse effect on their retargeting attitudes. This finding is again in contrast to prior research, which typically indicates that positive online review attitudes lead to favourable advertising responses. However, this discrepancy may be explained by the mean score calculated for the factor in this study ($X=3.86$), suggesting that the study sample may not heavily rely on or trust online reviews, despite their abundance. This insight is supported by Jha *et al.* (2023), who point out that an overabundance of reviews or inconsistencies between them can lead to consumer scepticism, potentially explaining the adverse effect observed in this case. It is vital to investigate South African consumers' sentiments towards online reviews since this was consistently negatively associated in the context of this study. This unique trend warrants a deeper exploration into how online reviews are perceived and their influence on consumer decision-making in the South African market. The most complex finding was the significant effect of intrusiveness ($\beta = -0.141$, $p = 0.021$, $p < 0.05$) on South African consumers' retargeting attitudes. It is not inconceivable that consumers would feel that repeated attempts at readvertising, albeit via email,

SMS or using cookie-marketing, is intrusive. Previous research by Lim *et al.* (2023) also supports the view that repeated exposure to retargeting advertisements can lead to a perception of intrusiveness, which negatively impacts consumer attitudes. Finally, three factors, namely conversion conditions, informativeness and privacy concerns explained 72.3 percent of the variance regarding South African consumers' online purchase intentions. Four factors, namely informativeness, online review attitudes and quality and e-reputation explained 55.4 percent of the variance regarding South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing. Four factors, namely informativeness, intrusiveness, online review attitudes and quality 49.5 percent in the variance regarding South African consumers' attitudes towards retargeting. The results from the SEM procedure served as input to the study's implications and subsequent recommendations.

5.12 Conclusion

The chapter provided a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing online purchase intentions through descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and structural equation modelling (SEM). The descriptive statistical analysis offered an overview of key metrics, including mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and frequency distributions, yielding valuable insights into the distribution of these factors and their role in shaping participants' attitudes toward online shopping. The subsequent correlation analysis highlighted significant relationships among the hypothesized factors, confirming the nomological validity of the proposed model by demonstrating the interrelations among constructs. Building on these results, hypotheses were rigorously tested using SEM and path analysis, ensuring a robust evaluation of the hypothesized relationships. The findings provided strong support for the study's conceptual framework, emphasizing the influence of critical factors such as remarketing and retargeting on participants' attitudes and purchase intentions. In the next chapter, these empirical findings will be further interpreted to evaluate the research objectives and determine whether they have been fully addressed. Chapter 6 will also link the findings to the theoretical framework established in earlier chapters, offering actionable recommendations based on the study's results, while discussing its limitations and contributions to the field of online consumer behaviour.

CHAPTER 6 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The increasing prominence of digital marketing strategies, particularly remarketing and retargeting, has reshaped the online shopping experience for consumers across the globe. These techniques, which leverage user data to deliver personalised and targeted advertisements, have proven to be effective tools in driving customer engagement and influencing online purchase behaviours. However, while these strategies have gained significant traction internationally, their impact on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions within the South African market remains an underexplored area of research.

Despite the growth of e-commerce in South Africa, there has been limited empirical investigation into the factors that drive consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting efforts. Additionally, local insights into how these marketing strategies affect online purchase intentions are sparse. This study aimed to fill this gap by examining the key determinants of consumer attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and how these attitudes translate into purchase decisions within the South African context. Grounded in a well-established theoretical model, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), this study extended this model to examine the factors influencing South African consumers' remarketing and retargeting attitudes and their online purchase intentions, namely conversion conditions, awareness, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation.

6.2 Study summation

This study aimed to investigate the factors influencing South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies and their subsequent impact on online purchase intentions. The study was framed by extending the TAM, subsequently contributing to a deeper understanding of how remarketing and retargeting, as key elements of e-commerce strategies, shape consumer behaviours in the South African context.

To achieve these objectives, a comprehensive literature review was conducted (Chapter 2), addressing digital marketing strategies, the growing relevance of remarketing and retargeting and the various factors that influence consumer attitudes towards these techniques. The theoretical framework of TAM was further explored in Chapter 3 to establish the model used to measure how these factors, namely conversion conditions, awareness, informativeness, privacy concerns, intrusiveness, website design, online review attitudes and quality, e-trust and e-reputation perceptually influence attitudes and online purchase intentions.

Chapter 4 outlined the research methodology adopted for this study. A quantitative research design was implemented, involving the use of a structured survey instrument to collect data online from a diverse sample of South African online consumers. The data were analysed using various statistical techniques, including exploratory factor analysis, descriptive statistics, a one-sample t-test, correlation analysis, multicollinearity and structural equation modelling (SEM), to empirically test the relationships between the constructs identified in the proposed model. Chapter 5 provided a detailed analysis of the empirical results, presenting key insights into the factors that drive consumer attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting efforts and their effect on online shopping behaviours.

The study's findings, discussed in detail in Chapter 5, offer valuable insights into how South African consumers perceive and respond to remarketing and retargeting strategies. These findings underline the importance of factors such as perceived usefulness, privacy concerns and trust in digital platforms, all of which significantly influence consumers' online purchase intentions. Accordingly, this last chapter sets out to provide a brief summation of the thesis (Section 6.2), a separate section highlighting the main findings (Section 6.3) as derived from Chapter 5, followed by the consequent implications and contributions of the findings (Section 6.4). Based on these implications and contributions, Section 6.5 provides 19 detailed practical recommendations, with the chapter concluding with the study's limitations and avenues for future research (Section 6.6).

6.3 Key findings of this study

This section outlines the key findings in accordance with the seven empirical objectives set in Chapter 1, Section 1.4.3 and Chapter 4, Section 4.3.3.

The present study sought to understand the dynamics that shape South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies and how the antecedent factors influence online purchase intentions. Anchored in the TAM, the study initially proposed a framework of thirteen key factors to assess these influences. After an exploratory principal components analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM), a refined ten-factor model emerged, revealing significant paths and removing non-significant ones. This model underscored the role of conversion conditions, informativeness, privacy concerns and online review attitudes and quality in shaping consumer remarketing and retargeting attitudes.

Conversion conditions exhibited the highest impact on online purchase intentions, suggesting that South African consumers are more likely to make purchases when advertisements are personalised, relevant and trustworthy and include promotional elements such as discounts. The significance of conversion conditions aligns with the previous literature emphasising the importance of personalisation and relevance in enhancing consumer engagement in digital

marketing. Informativeness was found to have a direct and robust impact on both attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, as well as a moderate influence on purchase intentions. This implies that advertisements that are informative and offer valuable product details are more likely to build positive attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies, thereby indirectly enhancing purchase intentions.

Privacy concerns showed a negative association with online purchase intentions.

The findings indicated that perceived intrusiveness negatively influenced attitudes towards retargeting.

Online review quality was found to significantly impact attitudes towards both remarketing and retargeting. Furthermore, the study found that attitudes towards online reviews negatively impacted remarketing attitudes.

While e-reputation did not directly impact purchase intentions, it was a significant factor in shaping attitudes towards remarketing. This suggests that a brand's online reputation indirectly influences consumer engagement through attitude formation, highlighting the need for brands to maintain a positive public image, even if it does not immediately lead to conversions.

The SEM model demonstrated strong fit indices, with RMSEA (0.041), CFI (0.963) and TLI (0.957), validating the robustness of the final model. Alternative models, ALT1 and ALT2, were tested to enhance the model fit by refining non-significant paths. These alternative models further confirmed the stability of the key predictors identified in the final model.

In summary, this study highlights the importance of conversion conditions, informativeness and online review quality as drivers of positive consumer attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies, with direct implications for online purchase intentions. The findings suggest that while informative and personalised advertisements are effective, privacy concerns and perceived intrusiveness remain critical factors that can mitigate these positive effects. For South African e-retailers, balancing relevance with privacy and ensuring high-quality online reviews is essential to build trust and enhance consumer engagement.

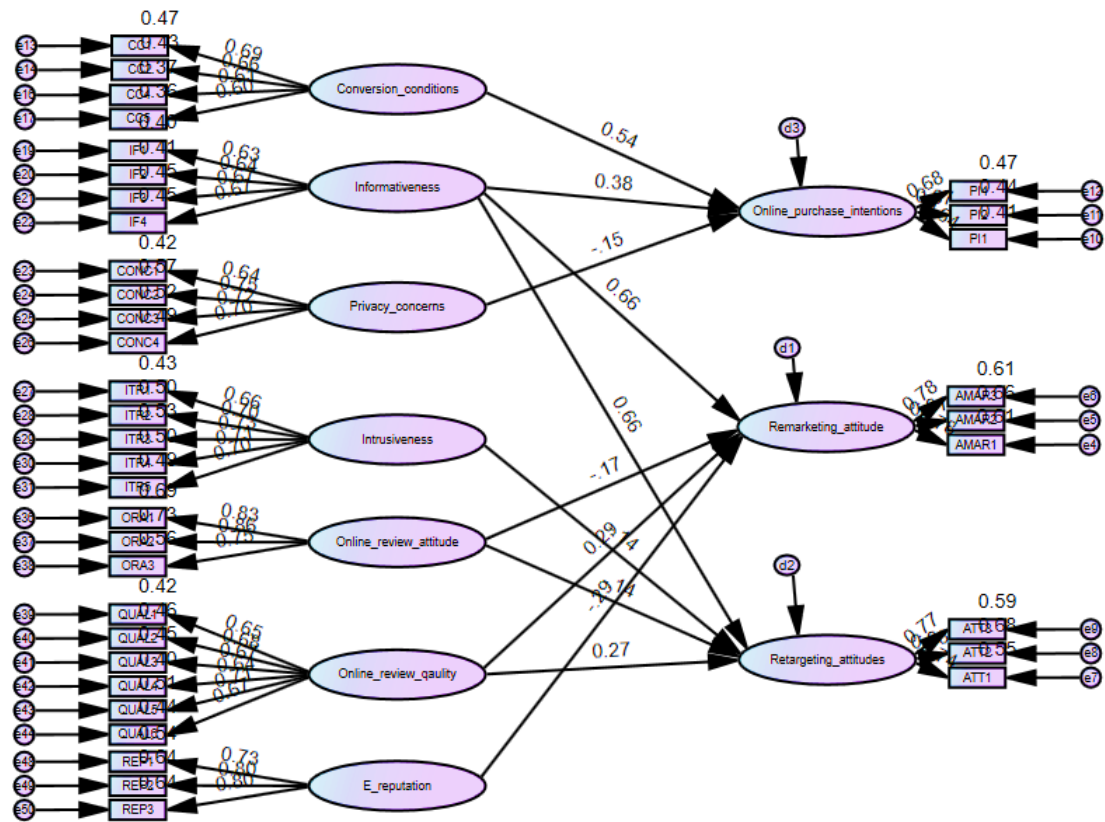


Figure 6.1: Model of the factors influencing South African consumers' remarketing and retargeting attitudes and their online purchase intentions

Figure 6.1 illustrates the refined model, capturing the significant paths and relationships between consumer attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions. This model provides a valuable framework for understanding the dynamics influencing South African consumers' engagement with remarketing strategies.

Given the nature and purpose of this study, a model was established that significantly contributes to the literature on remarketing and retargeting, areas that remain under-researched, particularly in the South African context. This study provides valuable insights into how South African consumers perceive remarketing and retargeting efforts, as well as the factors that influence their online shopping behaviours and purchase intentions. The following section elaborates on the contributions made by this research study.

6.4 Study implications and contributions

This study makes a significant contribution to the relatively under-explored area of South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting in the context of online shopping. As these digital marketing strategies continue to evolve, especially in emerging markets, this

research fills a crucial gap by providing empirical insights into how South African consumers perceive and react to remarketing and retargeting. By identifying key factors such as conversion conditions, privacy concerns, informativeness, intrusiveness and online review quality that shape consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, this study expands the understanding of online consumer behaviour within a South African context and offers practical implications for digital marketing strategies in similar emerging markets.

A central contribution of this study is the development and empirical validation of a structured model that clarifies the complex interrelationships between consumer attitudes, perceptions of marketing strategies and online purchase intentions. This model offers a valuable framework for understanding the key drivers of consumer engagement in the digital landscape, specifically highlighting the importance of informativeness, trust-building and privacy management in promoting positive attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting. The model underscores that while personalisation and relevance in advertisements increase purchase intentions, privacy concerns and perceived intrusiveness remain substantial barriers. This nuanced understanding can help online retailers operating in South Africa and other emerging economies design digital marketing strategies that balance personalisation with consumer privacy.

Additionally, the study contributes to the application and adaptation of global consumer behaviour theories, namely the TAM within a South African context. While this model has been extensively applied in developed markets, this research highlights both its applicability and limitations in a developing market, suggesting that some global trends in consumer behaviour may not fully align with local consumer perceptions and experiences. For instance, although conversion conditions significantly predict purchase intentions, the influence of factors like online review attitudes and e-reputation reflects distinct consumer expectations and cultural nuances within South Africa. Consequently, this study provides a region-specific adaptation of global research frameworks, bridging the gap between universal theories and localised consumer insights, making it a valuable resource for academics and practitioners in emerging markets.

Furthermore, this research advances the digital marketing literature by validating measurement scales for attitudes towards remarketing, retargeting and online purchase intentions specifically within the South African context. Through rigorous reliability and validity testing, the study confirms that these scales are robust tools for capturing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in emerging markets. The validated scales not only enhance the reliability of this study's findings but also offer a foundation for future research in similar contexts, enabling other researchers to apply these constructs to examine remarketing and retargeting effectiveness across diverse regions.

From a practical perspective, the study delivers actionable insights for organisations looking to refine their remarketing and retargeting strategies. As informativeness was found to have a positive influence, this study suggests that consumers are more responsive to advertisements that deliver relevant information and help them make informed purchase decisions. Furthermore, the findings emphasise the importance of enhancing the informativeness of advertising content to foster positive consumer attitudes and build trust.

While remarketing and retargeting may effectively engage consumers, privacy concerns remain significant barriers. South African consumers are particularly sensitive to data usage in advertising and concerns over privacy can deter purchase actions even if other elements of the advertisement are well-received. This finding highlights the importance of transparent data practices and respecting consumer privacy in digital marketing campaigns. As such, online retailers need to consider addressing privacy concerns transparently and managing advertisement frequency to reduce perceptions of intrusiveness, to create consumer-centric marketing campaigns that resonate with South African consumers' unique needs and preferences.

The negative effect of intrusive advertising can be attributed to repetitive or overly personalised advertisements, which may potentially harm consumer attitudes. This highlights the importance of ensuring a balance between targeted engagement and respecting personal boundaries for online retailers that wish to avoid negative perceptions of intrusiveness, which can diminish the effectiveness of retargeting efforts.

Owing to the significant influence of online reviews on attitudes to remarketing and retargeting and the negative impact posed on consumer attitudes, online retailers should make use of high-quality, credible online reviews to foster positive attitudes towards these strategies, bargaining of the premise that consumers rely on authentic feedback to assess brand reliability and product quality. However, online retailers do need to take caution when using online reviews as they could lead to scepticism towards certain review content, especially if reviews seem overly positive or lack depth, leading consumers to question the authenticity of the endorsements.

As e-reputation was found to be a significant contributor in shaping attitudes towards remarketing, it may be assumed that a brand's online reputation indirectly influences consumer engagement through attitudes formation, highlighting the need for brands to maintain a positive public image, even if it does not immediately lead to conversions.

Additionally, the study underscores the importance of e-trust as a foundation for consumer loyalty and advocacy in the digital space. In today's competitive online marketplace, building trust through transparent and responsible marketing practices can lead to enhanced consumer advocacy, transforming short-term engagement into long-term relationships. The research

suggests that focusing on e-reputation, credible online reviews and user-friendly website design can increase consumer satisfaction and foster a sense of security that is critical for sustained online engagement.

In conclusion, this study contributes both theoretically and practically by offering new insights into the dynamics of remarketing and retargeting in the South African online market. It provides a framework adaptable to various contexts, helping organisations and researchers explore consumer behaviour across different regions. For organisations, the study offers practical guidance on building stronger consumer relationships and developing targeted, effective marketing strategies that prioritise consumer trust, relevance and transparency. This contribution is especially pertinent as organisations seek to enhance consumer trust and loyalty in the rapidly growing, competitive digital landscape of South Africa and other similar markets.

6.5 Practical recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to provide practical guidance to online retail industry stakeholders to guide their future remarketing and retargeting strategies to influence South African consumers' online purchase intentions.

6.5.1 Enhance consumer segmentation and targeting by constantly analysing the online consumer demographics and behaviour

This study highlights distinct demographic preferences and behavioural patterns among South African consumers, as shown in Section 5.5.1. However, these patterns are dynamic, shaped by technological advancements, lifestyle changes and shifting social contexts. Consequently, it is essential for online retailers and relevant stakeholders including strategic managers, marketing teams and digital analysts to continuously monitor and analyse consumer demographic and behavioural data at both strategic and tactical levels to adapt to these evolving trends.

The analysis outlined in Table 5.5 indicates that regional differences strongly influence consumer behaviour. For instance, Gauteng has the highest concentration of consumers, followed by Free State and North-West. This suggests that targeted marketing campaigns and promotions could be particularly effective in these areas. Organisations should develop tailored messaging that resonates with the cultural and regional characteristics of these provinces, ensuring that advertisements reflect the specific needs and preferences of local audiences. On a strategic level, this may involve collaborating with regional influencers or brands to enhance message authenticity and establish a more relatable presence within these key markets. Language preference also plays a critical role in enhancing regional engagement. While English remains the preferred language of respondents, Setswana and Afrikaans are also widely used, with

Setswana preferred by the consumer base. Given this diversity, it is advisable for organisations to implement a bilingual or multilingual approach in their advertising content, particularly by incorporating English and Setswana in areas with high concentrations of Setswana speakers. Research by Arli (2024) supports the importance of language accessibility, showing that multilingual content improves engagement across diverse demographic segments. Strategically, organisations should focus on integrating multi-language support across all digital marketing channels. On a strategic level, collaborating with bilingual influencers can enhance message reach and authenticity, particularly among Setswana-speaking audiences.

Stakeholders should identify regions with linguistic diversity, tailor content to meet local language preferences and consistently monitor engagement metrics to refine and maximise regional outreach efforts. Gender-based analysis reveals a predominant female consumer base, with women comprising 64.9 percent of respondents. This insight provides a strategic opportunity to tailor marketing campaigns towards female shoppers, especially on popular platforms like Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest. These platforms are well-suited for lifestyle categories such as fashion, beauty and home decor, aligning with the preferences of female consumers. At a strategic level, organisations should prioritise investments in visually engaging, lifestyle-oriented content on these platforms, which may improve engagement and conversion rates. On a strategic level, brands can enhance their reach by collaborating with influencers popular in these lifestyle segments. Such collaborations can leverage influencers' existing trust and rapport with female followers, thereby strengthening brand credibility and appeal among this key demographic (Abirami & Rajan, 2022).

The study further identifies age-specific preferences, with middle-aged consumers (29-38 years) showing a distinct inclination towards practicality and convenience in their purchases. Products that offer functional benefits, such as time-saving appliances or multi-purpose gadgets, are likely to resonate with this group. Strategically, organisations should develop advertisement narratives that emphasise product functionality, quality and durability to appeal to this demographic. Strategically, offering loyalty rewards and discounts on practical items can encourage repeat purchases and strengthen brand loyalty. Additionally, segmenting this age group by specific interests, such as home appliances or remote work solutions, enables more targeted marketing that aligns with their lifestyle and needs.

6.5.2 Use awareness campaigns as a tool to educate consumers about remarketing and retargeting strategies

It is evident from Table 5.12 and the rejection of H4_a and H4_b, that South African consumers are very unfamiliar with remarketing and retargeting ads. Thus, educating consumers on remarketing

and retargeting strategies can significantly shape their perceptions and foster greater acceptance and engagement with these marketing techniques. Although consumer awareness of these strategies does not directly impact purchase intentions, it does play a substantial role in influencing attitudes towards targeted advertisements. Research by Jha *et al.* (2023) suggests that when consumers understand the value of remarketing and how it benefits them through personalised content, they are more likely to perceive these advertisements as helpful rather than invasive.

At a strategic level, organisations should focus on developing educational content that demystifies remarketing and retargeting, highlighting the advantages these strategies offer to consumers. Content should be transparent, positioning these strategies as value-driven tools rather than intrusive marketing strategies. By explaining how remarketing leverages past interactions to offer more relevant recommendations, companies can enhance consumer appreciation for targeted advertisements. On a strategic level, the awareness campaigns can be implemented through various digital platforms, including blog posts, social media and webinars. According to Kolesky (2021), blog articles outline the benefits of retargeting, demonstrating how it saves consumers time by showing products they previously expressed interest in. Webinars or video content could provide a more interactive approach, where consumers can ask questions and engage directly with experts who explain these techniques. Social media campaigns can also be an effective channel, using short, digestible posts to share insights on remarketing and retargeting in a relatable, accessible manner.

To enhance engagement, personalisation should be incorporated into these educational materials, tailoring content to the interests and previous online behaviours of consumers. By integrating awareness campaigns with educational and transparent messaging, organisations can create a foundation of trust and understanding among consumers. When consumers recognise remarketing as a tool designed to enhance their shopping experience, rather than merely as a strategy to increase sales, their attitudes towards these advertisements are likely to become more favourable. These strategies are expected to increase engagement with retargeted content, making consumers more receptive to remarketing efforts and ultimately fostering stronger brand relationships.

6.5.3 Optimising conversion conditions to boost purchase intentions

Following the acceptance of H₃, optimising conversion conditions is essential to increasing online purchase intentions. The study identifies that several key factors significantly influence South African consumers' purchase behaviour online ($\beta = 0.539$, $p = 0.005$). Consumers show a positive response to trusted, relevant and personalised advertisements, suggesting that relevance and

personalisation are powerful tools in digital marketing. Advertisements that offer time-limited discounts or promotional codes aligned with prior user interactions enhance user experience and engagement, consistent with findings from Choi & Thorson (2019) on the effectiveness of personalisation in content relevance. To improve the online conversion experience, organisations should streamline the checkout process to reduce friction during transactions. Ensuring a straightforward checkout process, including self-service options and simplified forms, along with guest checkout functionality, helps speed up transactions and minimises consumer frustration. Offering multiple payment methods, such as mobile payments, digital wallets and instalment plans, also caters to a broader audience, making transactions more convenient and accessible. Additionally, implementing pre-order and pre-payment options allows consumers to plan their purchases ahead, which can reduce perceived waiting times and enhance the overall user experience.

Leveraging geolocation data to tailor offers based on consumer proximity to certain stores or delivery zones can enhance access convenience. This approach ensures that consumers receive location-specific offers, which increases relevance and accessibility. Moreover, providing extended customer support hours for online shoppers caters to various time zones and preferences, ensuring that assistance is available when consumers need it most, which can positively influence conversion rates. Improving on-site search capabilities with predictive text, filters and sorting options enables consumers to find products quickly and efficiently. This mirrors in-store strategies where products are arranged to facilitate easy access, thereby creating a more seamless online shopping experience. Using consumer behaviour analytics, dynamic product recommendations can be displayed based on prior interactions or similar items, thereby increasing personalisation and relevance.

Dynamic retargeting advertisements that reflect previous user interactions, such as products viewed or added to the cart, can be highly effective when combined with time-sensitive discounts. By aligning advertisements with consumer demographics, browsing history and past purchase behaviour, organisations can create personalised advertisements that are more likely to resonate with individual consumers, thereby boosting engagement and conversion rates. To maintain and enhance these optimised conversion conditions, organisations should continuously monitor consumer feedback and analyse conversion data to identify and address potential bottlenecks. Regularly collecting post-purchase feedback provides insights into consumer satisfaction with the transaction process and highlights areas for improvement. Furthermore, ongoing A/B testing on key conversion elements, including calls-to-action, payment options and page layouts, helps to pinpoint which features yield the highest conversion rates. This approach of continuous monitoring and adaptation ensures that the transaction process remains smooth, responsive and

closely aligned with evolving consumer expectations, ultimately fostering a personalised shopping experience that drives higher purchase intentions.

6.5.4 Use data analytics to assess consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting

To effectively assess consumer attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting, data analytics can play a crucial role in revealing insights on consumer engagement, preferences and response patterns. This technique is especially crucial to enhance consumers' attitudes towards R/R strategies so that it has a ripple effect on their online purchase intent – which is not yet the case according to H_1 and H_2 .

6.5.4.1 Optimise for remarketing

To understand and enhance consumer perceptions of remarketing and retargeting, organisations should implement a structured approach to data analytics that provides insight into consumer engagement and informs targeted improvements. In remarketing, defining clear objectives is essential. Key metrics like click-through rates, conversion rates and return on advertising spend serve as a foundation for assessing remarketing performance and consumer response. Organisations should analyse consumer segments based on behaviours such as product browsing, cart abandonment and past purchases to tailor remarketing content that aligns with each group's preferences, increasing the relevance and appeal of advertisements. Cohort analysis can further illuminate how consumer attitudes shift with repeated exposure to remarketing, enabling organisations to adjust advertisement frequency and content to sustain interest.

6.5.4.2 Optimise for retargeting

For retargeting, metrics such as click-through rate and cart abandonment recovery rate are crucial for evaluating effectiveness (Hunter *et al.*, 2023). The behavioural analysis allows organisations to track how consumers interact with retargeting advertisements around abandoned carts or viewed products, providing insights into which advertisements successfully re-engage consumers and which may fall short. To avoid consumer fatigue, organisations should carefully monitor the frequency of retargeting advertisements, balancing engagement with user tolerance. Funnel analysis can map the consumer journey from retargeting interaction to purchase, identifying any drop-off points and optimising messaging to smooth the conversion path. By integrating quantitative data with qualitative feedback, organisations can develop remarketing and

retargeting strategies that are more personalised, consumer-friendly and effective, fostering stronger customer relationships and optimising marketing impact.

6.5.5 Continuously gather data on consumer perceptions and attitudes through surveys to adapt and refine marketing strategies to stay aligned with consumer expectations

This study highlights the importance of ongoing consumer feedback to adapt to rapidly evolving consumer preferences and expectations. Regular surveys provide actionable insights into consumer perceptions and attitudes, which are essential for shaping responsive and customer-centric marketing strategies. By maintaining a continuous feedback loop, organisations can proactively adjust their campaigns, messaging and product offerings to ensure alignment with consumer needs. This ongoing data collection helps deepen understanding of consumer motivations, satisfaction levels and emerging trends, empowering organisations to stay adaptable in an increasingly dynamic market environment. The rationale for continuous consumer feedback lies in its ability to provide timely and relevant insights. External factors such as technological advancements, economic changes and cultural shifts significantly impact consumer attitudes. For example, the high weekly (34.4 percent) and daily (25.8 percent) browsing frequencies observed in the present study underscore the importance of monitoring consumer engagement regularly. Frequent browsing behaviour suggests that consumer preferences can change quickly, making periodic surveys crucial to keep pace with these shifts.

By consistently gathering data on consumer attitudes, organisations can strengthen brand loyalty, increase customer satisfaction and make data-informed adjustments that enhance marketing effectiveness. Implementation of this strategy requires well-designed surveys that capture essential insights. Survey questions should address key areas such as brand trustworthiness, satisfaction with products or services, reactions to recent campaigns and opinions on data privacy and personalisation. Combining quantitative closed-ended questions with open-ended ones provides a comprehensive view of consumer attitudes. Surveys should be conducted regularly, ideally at critical customer journey points (e.g., post-purchase, post-campaign), to capture shifting perceptions, particularly following major campaigns or product launches.

Segmenting surveys based on consumer demographics and engagement levels allows for more targeted insights. By tailoring surveys for different demographic groups (e.g., age, income, region) and engagement levels (new, repeat, or lapsed customers), organisations can observe how perceptions vary across these segments. For instance, segmenting survey data by income level where 22.8 percent of consumers fall into the R30 001–R52 500 bracket and 22.2 percent into the R52 501–R72 000 range can help organisations tailor loyalty programs and special offers to appeal to these specific groups. Integrating past behavioural data (e.g., products browsed or

purchased) into survey design further personalises the feedback process, making survey questions more relevant to each consumer's experience. Insights gathered from these surveys should directly inform marketing strategy adjustments. Analysing trends within survey responses can reveal popular product categories, preferred advertising approaches, or common consumer concerns. For example, the high interest in categories such as Health, Beauty & Personal Care and Household Essentials & Groceries suggests areas where focused marketing efforts may yield positive results. By using survey data to address consumer pain points, such as dissatisfaction with product availability or the checkout process, organisations can enhance both marketing messages and operational practices to improve consumer satisfaction and retention.

Testing and iterating marketing strategies based on survey insights enable organisations to remain flexible and data driven. For instance, experimenting with different campaign messages, channels, or offers based on survey feedback and following up with additional surveys to measure impact, supports agile and responsive marketing practices that adapt to changing consumer preferences. To enhance the efficiency of this feedback process, organisations can leverage technology for real-time insights. Integrating survey platforms with CRM systems allows for efficient capture of consumer responses, enabling marketers to monitor feedback continuously and detect shifts promptly. Employing sentiment analysis on open-ended survey responses provides insights into consumer mood, helping identify whether sentiment is trending positively or negatively. Using machine learning tools to automate response analysis can reveal emerging themes in consumer feedback, guiding timely and effective marketing responses.

6.5.6 Enhance consumers' online purchase intentions

In this study, purchase intention (PI) refers to the likelihood that consumers will buy products they previously searched for and re-encounter through online advertisements, social media, or email reminders. PI is shaped by various factors, including the consumer's intention to buy the advertised products, their desire to own these items and the likelihood of acting on reminders to complete the purchase. With a moderate mean value of 4.02, the data suggests there is room to strengthen South African consumers' online purchase intentions to drive higher conversion rates. To address this gap, online retailers can focus on improving customer experience, engaging actively on social media and closely monitoring the outcomes of remarketing and retargeting (R/R) campaigns.

6.5.6.1 Provide excellent customer service

For South African organisations aiming to increase online purchase intentions, delivering excellent customer service is essential. Customer support builds consumer trust and directly

impacts the likelihood of purchase completion (Torkington, 2021). Data from this study indicates high engagement with popular shopping sites such as Takealot, Woolworths and Checkers, suggesting that South African consumers value established, trusted retailers. To strengthen this trust, organisations should provide 24/7 customer support across multiple channels, including live chat, email and social media. This multichannel approach allows customers to reach assistance on their preferred platforms, enhancing convenience and overall satisfaction. In addition, leveraging social proof can further reinforce consumer trust. Highlighting testimonials and user-generated content, particularly on top social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest, showcases positive customer experiences.

For instance, featuring reviews or customer photos using products from popular categories such as Health & Beauty, Household Essentials and Clothing & Fashion can encourage potential buyers by demonstrating real-life benefits. Proactive engagement, including automated responses for common queries and follow-up messages post-purchase, shows commitment to customer care. Personalised support, such as addressing returning customers by name or referencing previous interactions, adds a layer of familiarity that can increase the likelihood of repeat purchases. By focusing on responsive, helpful customer service and incorporating social proof, South African businesses can build lasting trust and confidence, making consumers more inclined to complete online purchases.

6.5.6.2 Engage on social media

Active social media engagement is a powerful tool for South African organisations to reinforce purchase intentions and build a loyal customer base. This study reveals that Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest are the top social media platforms for consumer interaction, making them key channels for brand engagement. By maintaining a strong, interactive presence on these platforms, organisations can build meaningful relationships with potential customers and drive traffic to their websites. Posting engaging content, such as polls, Q&A sessions and user-generated content, encourages followers to interact with the brand. For instance, organisations can use social proof by featuring testimonials, influencer collaborations, or user-generated posts showcasing popular product categories like Clothing & Fashion, Health & Beauty and Electronics. Prompt responses to comments and messages demonstrate attentiveness and help build brand credibility, reinforcing the brand's value in the eyes of consumers. Additionally, sharing educational content, such as product tutorials, how-to videos and informational posts, can help consumers understand product benefits and address potential purchase hesitations. This type of content is particularly effective for categories with complex products, such as Smart Technologies or DIY & Home Improvement. By consistently engaging on social media and creating a

community-driven experience, South African organisations can enhance brand familiarity, build trust and positively influence purchase intentions, encouraging consumers to move from social media interaction to actual sales.

6.5.6.3 Monitor and analyse conversions after executing remarketing and retargeting campaigns

For South African organisations to maximise the impact of remarketing and retargeting (R/R) strategies, close monitoring and analysis of conversions are crucial given their direct relation to online purchase intention (H_3). Using advanced analytics tools can help organisations assess the effectiveness of these campaigns and identify which elements drive the highest engagement and conversions. Given the popularity of online shopping platforms such as Takealot, Woolworths and Checkers, targeted R/R campaigns for consumers who visit these sites can increase the likelihood of follow-up purchases. A/B testing various advertisement formats, messages and visuals help reveal the combinations that resonate most with South African consumers. Conversion tracking and attribution analysis tools, such as Google Analytics and Facebook Pixel, can map the consumer journey from advertisement exposure to purchase, identifying the touchpoints that drive conversions. This analysis can inform more efficient resource allocation for future R/R campaigns.

Additionally, sentiment analysis of consumer feedback collected through surveys, social media comments and reviews provides valuable insights into consumer attitudes towards R/R campaigns. This feedback highlights areas for improvement in messaging or targeting, helping organisations adjust their approach to meet consumer expectations better. Leveraging sophisticated analytics and consistent feedback collection enables South African organisations to adapt their R/R strategies to be more relevant and effective. This data-driven approach not only improves the efficiency of remarketing campaigns but also enhances online purchase intentions by aligning marketing efforts with consumer preferences. Through regular monitoring and targeted refinement, organisations can achieve higher conversion rates and cultivate stronger connections with their customer base.

6.5.7 Leverage informativeness to improve consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting

As per Table 5.20 and Figure 5.5 and the acceptance of H_{5a} , H_{5b} and H_{5g} , informativeness is a key factor in shaping consumer attitudes towards online advertisements, especially for remarketing and retargeting efforts. This study highlights that informativeness significantly impacts consumer attitudes towards both remarketing ($\beta = 0.663$, $p = 0.000$) and retargeting ($\beta = 0.657$, $p = 0.000$). This recommendation aligns with research by Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019)

and Aljabari *et al.* (2023), which emphasise that informative advertising fosters positive attitudes and is essential for converting browsing behaviour into purchases, particularly in markets like South Africa, where digital advertising trust is still developing.

In the South African context, consumers may approach digital advertisements with scepticism due to concerns about transparency and trustworthiness. Many advertisements lack detailed product information, clear comparisons, or answers to common questions elements that could make advertisements more compelling and trustworthy. To address these challenges, online retailers should enhance the informativeness of their remarketing and retargeting advertisements through three key approaches: providing essential product information, including comparative data and addressing frequently asked questions (FAQs). Each approach is aimed at increasing consumer confidence and encouraging conversions.

First, organisations are recommended to provide essential product information directly within retargeting and remarketing advertisements. This includes showcasing core features, specifications and unique benefits that help consumers quickly understand a product's value. Secondly, organisations should incorporate comparative data within advertisements to build consumer trust and position their products advantageously in a competitive context. By positioning products transparently and offering clear comparisons, organisations can build consumer confidence and reduce the need for further research. Finally, organisations should address frequently asked questions (FAQs) within retargeting and remarketing advertisements to reduce purchase hesitancy. Many consumers abandon purchases due to unresolved questions about product usage, shipping, or return policies. By proactively addressing FAQs, organisations demonstrate transparency and responsiveness, reducing barriers to purchase and increasing the likelihood of conversion.

In conclusion, enhancing the informativeness of remarketing and retargeting advertisements by providing essential product information, including comparative data and addressing FAQs can significantly improve consumer attitudes towards digital advertising. By aligning advertisement content with consumers' expectations for transparency and helpfulness, these strategies make online advertisements more relevant, trustworthy and effective. Implementing these recommendations can foster positive consumer attitudes, increase advertisement engagement and ultimately drive higher conversion rates in South African digital markets where establishing trust is essential.

6.5.8 Leverage informativeness to increase conversions based on remarketing and retargeting strategies

The study identified that informativeness in remarketing and retargeting messages has a moderately positive effect on purchase intentions, with a coefficient of $\beta=0.378$ and a significance level of $p=0.044$. This indicates that when South African consumers find retargeted advertisements informative, they are moderately more likely to consider making a purchase. This finding highlights the importance of providing value through relevant, concise and useful information that supports consumers in their decision-making process.

To increase conversions, South African organisations should prioritise enhancing the informativeness of their remarketing and retargeting messages. This can be achieved by ensuring that advertisements offer meaningful information about products, including benefits, unique features, availability, pricing and any special offers or locally relevant promotions. Instead of using retargeting advertisements solely to reinforce brand recall, organisations should design these messages to communicate valuable details that help consumers make informed purchasing decisions, particularly those revisiting products they have previously shown interest in. To implement this recommendation effectively, South African organisations should adopt several targeted strategies. First, they should create segmented advertisement content that is tailored to different consumer groups based on behavioural data, such as browsing history and past purchases, as well as demographic data specific to the South African market. For instance, consumers who previously viewed a particular product might be more inclined to engage with retargeted advertisements that highlight the product's unique features, customer reviews, or key benefits, especially if these elements align with their interests.

Additionally, South African organisations should focus on conveying specific product advantages, such as discounts, limited-time offers, or product availability. By including culturally relevant content or promotions that resonate with South African consumers (such as seasonal sales or exclusive deals), companies can make their advertisements more appealing and relevant. South African organisations should emphasise specific product advantages, such as discounts or limited-time offers and incorporate culturally relevant promotions around local events to make advertisements more appealing. Utilising dynamic advertising platforms allows organisations to update advertisements in real-time with stock levels, new discounts, or pricing changes, ensuring that advertisements stay relevant and informative. Continuous A/B testing of informative elements, like customer reviews or product comparisons, helps organisations refine advertisement content to drive higher engagement and conversions within the South African market.

By enhancing the informativeness of retargeted advertisements, South African organisations can expect an increase in both consumer engagement and conversion rates. South African consumers who perceive advertisements as informative are more likely to find them valuable, which in turn strengthens their purchase intentions. This approach is anticipated to amplify the effectiveness of remarketing and retargeting efforts, particularly among consumers who are in the consideration or decision-making stages of the buying process.

6.5.9 Engage in clear communication regarding the use of consumer data used in remarketing and retargeting to alleviate privacy concerns

As per the acceptance of H5h in Table 5.20, privacy concerns remain a barrier to purchase intentions, with this study indicating a negative impact of privacy concerns on purchase intentions ($\beta = -0.147$, $p = 0.021$). It is recommended that organisations establish transparent data practices by clearly outlining data usage policies and providing users with options to adjust their data preferences. Visible compliance certifications, such as GDPR adherence, can also reassure consumers about data protection practices, as suggested by Rehman *et al.* (2020). Organisations should establish clear data practices that explain how consumer data will be used, offering options for consumers to manage data preferences. Visible compliance certifications, such as GDPR or POPIA, can also reassure users of data protection standards (Rehman *et al.*, 2020).

To implement this, organisations should create a user-friendly data usage policy that clearly explains what data is collected, why it is needed and how it will be used in marketing. This policy should be accessible on the website and within remarketing messages, written in clear, non-technical language. Providing a centralised "Privacy Settings" feature where consumers can adjust data preferences such as opting in or out of personalised advertisements empowers consumers to control their data usage. This feature could be integrated into account settings for registered users or linked directly from advertisements, making data control accessible. To further enhance transparency, organisations should prominently display POPIA or GDPR compliance certifications on their websites and in email communications. This could involve displaying trust badges, compliance logos, or short statements to highlight privacy adherence. Including brief summaries of data protection protocols, such as anonymisation or encryption, can also help reassure consumers. Organisations should also communicate any updates to data policies periodically, through emails or website pop-ups, to keep consumers informed and maintain trust. Transparent data communication can reduce privacy concerns and improve consumer trust, making consumers more receptive to personalised advertisements by alleviating fears of data misuse. This approach is likely to positively impact purchase intentions by addressing psychological barriers related to privacy. To measure the effectiveness of this strategy,

organisations can track consumer engagement with privacy settings to gauge interest in data preferences. Additionally, monitoring shifts in consumer trust and satisfaction, particularly through feedback surveys, can reveal insights into consumer attitudes towards data transparency. Tracking purchase intention metrics over time can also show if transparent data practices lead to positive behavioural shifts.

In conclusion, clear and transparent communication about data usage is essential for addressing privacy concerns that limit purchase intentions in South Africa. By offering accessible privacy settings, compliance certifications and regular updates, organisations can foster consumer trust, reduce privacy-related worries and ultimately support higher conversion rates and brand loyalty.

6.5.10 Implement transparent data practices and provide easy-to-understand privacy policies

To enhance consumer trust and improve the effectiveness of remarketing and retargeting strategies, organisations, retailers and service providers should prioritise transparency in their data practices and ensure that privacy policies are easily accessible and understandable for users. First, organisations should implement a clear, concise privacy policy that outlines what data is collected, why it is collected, how it will be used in marketing activities and for how long it will be stored. Avoiding technical jargon and legal complexity will make these policies more user-friendly. Additionally, organisations should provide real-time, proactive notifications regarding data collection methods when users interact with their online platforms, ensuring users are aware of their data being used in remarketing activities. Furthermore, providing users with opt-in and opt-out choices for data collection and targeted advertisements helps create a sense of control, allowing them to engage only with the data practices they are comfortable with. Integrating a straightforward data management dashboard where users can view, manage, or delete their collected data can further enhance trust. Lastly, organisations should consider regular audits of their privacy practices to align with evolving regulations and user expectations and actively communicate any changes to data usage policies. Emphasising ethical data practices not only safeguards compliance with legal frameworks but also strengthens consumer confidence, fostering loyalty and long-term engagement, which are crucial for the success of remarketing and retargeting efforts.

6.5.11 Limit the degree of intrusiveness with respect to retargeting efforts to avoid the formation of negative attitudes towards the online retailer

To optimise retargeting effectiveness and mitigate perceived intrusiveness, online retailers should set clear boundaries on advertisement frequency and employ personalised strategies. The study

findings underscore that high intrusiveness negatively impacts consumer attitudes towards retargeting efforts ($\beta = -0.141$, $p = 0.021$), making it essential to cap exposure frequency to reduce irritation. To maintain a positive brand perception while engaging in retargeting efforts, online retailers should carefully calibrate the frequency and visibility of their advertisements to avoid overwhelming users, which can lead to negative attitudes. One effective approach is to implement frequency caps on retargeting advertisements to prevent excessive exposure; limiting advertisements to a reasonable number, such as two or three impressions per user per day, helps avoid irritation without sacrificing visibility.

Additionally, retailers can leverage segmentation techniques to tailor retargeting messages based on user intent and behaviour, ensuring advertisements are relevant to consumers' actual interests rather than applying a generic approach. Rotating creative content can also reduce advertisement fatigue, presenting varied offers or visuals that maintain engagement without redundancy. Another strategy is to use time-sensitive retargeting, where advertisements appear within an optimal timeframe after a user's visit, rather than lingering indefinitely, which can lead to brand aversion. Transparent explanations for advertisement visibility, such as "why you're seeing this advertisement" notifications, can further enhance user understanding and comfort, creating a sense of agency over their experience. Balancing relevance with respect for user boundaries will foster a healthier relationship between the retailer and the consumer, preserving goodwill and enhancing the likelihood of conversions through retargeting efforts.

6.5.12 Use personalisation strategies carefully to avoid the perceived intrusiveness of retargeting

South African organisations should adopt a cautious approach to personalisation in retargeting to balance engagement with consumer privacy. Personalisation can significantly enhance the perceived value of advertisements; however, when not carefully managed, it risks crossing boundaries and creating a sense of intrusiveness. To effectively use personalisation without overstepping, organisations should ensure that content is personalised in a subtle manner, focusing on broader interests and recent consumer actions rather than detailed behavioural data. For example, grouping users by general interests, like "eco-friendly shoppers" or "tech enthusiasts," allows organisations to deliver relevant messages that resonate without being overly specific. Additionally, organisations should limit advertisement frequency to a few times per week and include diverse creatives to keep content fresh and relevant, which reduces advertisement fatigue and enhances user experience. Transparent communication about data use, through "why you're seeing this advertisement" prompts, can reassure consumers about privacy practices and boost advertisement acceptance. By balancing personalised content with respect for consumer

boundaries, South African retailers can cultivate a more positive perception of their brand and foster long-term customer loyalty.

6.5.13 Enhance website design for improved user experience

Although website design does not directly influence purchase intentions, it significantly impacts consumer attitudes towards remarketing efforts ($\beta = 0.288$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, South African organisations should focus on improving their website design to enhance the effectiveness of their remarketing strategies. A well-designed, user-friendly website can foster positive perceptions, making users more receptive to future remarketing messages. Organisations should focus on creating an intuitive layout that facilitates easy navigation and provides a seamless shopping experience. Ensuring that the site is mobile-responsive, given the high mobile usage rate in South Africa, will further enhance accessibility and user satisfaction. Additionally, optimising for fast load times and incorporating features such as clear search functionality, visually appealing product displays and engaging, culturally relevant content can contribute to a more enjoyable browsing experience, indirectly enhancing attitudes towards remarketing. By improving website design to meet user expectations, organisations can cultivate a more favourable environment for remarketing, increasing the likelihood of successful engagement and conversion.

6.5.14 Leverage consumers' positive online review attitudes as a tool to enhance the effectiveness of remarketing strategies

To boost the effectiveness of remarketing, South African organisations should proactively encourage positive customer reviews and strategically integrate them into their advertising efforts. High-quality online reviews are shown to significantly improve consumer attitudes towards remarketing ($\beta = 0.288$, $p = 0.000$) and retargeting ($\beta = 0.266$, $p = 0.000$), underscoring the importance of consumer feedback in shaping favourable brand perceptions. Encouraging satisfied customers to leave positive reviews through post-purchase prompts or incentives can help build a strong, authentic base of endorsements. These reviews serve as a foundation for trust-building; prominently featuring customer feedback in remarketing advertisements, such as using star ratings or snippets of top reviews, can reinforce brand credibility and encourage engagement by leveraging the power of social proof.

Dynamic remarketing advertisements that showcase products with high ratings or recent positive reviews can ensure that advertisements stay relevant and appealing. For an added local connection, featuring testimonials from South African customers can make advertisements more relatable to local audiences, creating a sense of trust that resonates with domestic consumers. To further capitalise on positive reviews, organisations can use labels such as “bestseller” or

“most-loved” within remarketing content, reinforcing the popularity and quality of products and encouraging prospective customers to take action. Conversely, it is critical to monitor and address negative reviews promptly, as negative attitudes towards online reviews can lead to unfavourable perceptions of remarketing ($\beta = -0.171$, $p = 0.011$). By actively managing online feedback and consistently promoting positive reviews, South African organisations can enhance consumer trust, elevate their e-reputation and create more compelling, credible remarketing campaigns that drive engagement and conversions.

6.5.15 Utilise consumers’ positive attitudes towards online reviews to improve the impact of retargeting strategies

To enhance the effectiveness of retargeting efforts, South African organisations should strategically incorporate positive online reviews into their advertisement content, taking advantage of consumers' trust in peer feedback. Positive online reviews play a critical role in shaping favourable attitudes towards brands and can be a powerful element in retargeting campaigns, making advertisements feel more trustworthy and relevant to potential customers. Featuring high-quality reviews in retargeting advertisements such as using snippets of top reviews, star ratings, or testimonials from local customers can create a sense of social proof, reassuring consumers of a product's quality and encouraging them to reconsider making a purchase. Incorporating this review-based content, such as “most-loved” or “top-rated” labels, taps into consumers’ desire to make informed choices, particularly for products they previously browsed but did not buy. Using real and relatable reviews from South African customers can further boost credibility and local relevance, making retargeting advertisements feel more authentic and compelling. To maintain a positive perception, organisations should regularly monitor reviews, addressing any negative feedback promptly to ensure that only genuine, favourable testimonials support their retargeting efforts.

By strategically leveraging positive online reviews within retargeting strategies, organisations can build consumer trust, enhance advertisement relevance and increase conversion rates. This approach aligns with consumers’ favourable attitudes towards peer feedback, strengthening the overall effectiveness of retargeting campaigns and fostering a stronger connection between the brand and its audience.

6.5.16 Strive to maintain high-quality online reviews to enhance the effectiveness of remarketing strategies

For South African organisations aiming to optimise remarketing efforts, maintaining a consistently high quality of online reviews is essential. Positive and authentic reviews are powerful tools that

enhance the credibility and appeal of remarketing campaigns, making them more persuasive and trustworthy in the eyes of potential customers. High-quality reviews not only build consumer trust but also directly influence attitudes towards remarketing, as they provide reassuring, real-world insights into product experiences. Organisations should focus on encouraging satisfied customers to leave detailed, genuine reviews by offering post-purchase prompts or small incentives. Emphasising recent, verified and positive reviews in remarketing content can reinforce brand reliability and attract returning customers.

Additionally, using sentiment analysis tools to monitor and manage review quality allows organisations to identify areas for improvement and respond to emerging trends in consumer feedback proactively. Addressing negative feedback promptly and transparently can help maintain a positive online presence, further strengthening the impact of remarketing. Through a strong base of high-quality reviews, organisations can drive consumer confidence, create a more compelling remarketing experience and ultimately improve engagement and conversion rates. A focus on maintaining review quality provides consumers with valuable insights, supporting remarketing campaigns and fostering long-term loyalty.

6.5.17 Ensure high-quality online reviews to enhance the effectiveness of retargeting strategies

South African organisations can significantly enhance the impact of retargeting strategies by ensuring a steady flow of high-quality online reviews. Positive and genuine reviews act as social proof, reinforcing the credibility of retargeting advertisements and encouraging potential customers to revisit products they previously viewed. High-quality reviews that are recent, detailed and from verified buyers can address potential concerns, build consumer trust and increase the likelihood of conversions upon encountering retargeting advertisements.

To achieve this, organisations should actively encourage satisfied customers to leave reviews by offering post-purchase prompts or small incentives, focusing on capturing authentic feedback that potential customers find valuable. Displaying snippets of these high-quality reviews or ratings within retargeting advertisements can help reduce consumer hesitation by showcasing real user experiences, which makes the advertisements more relatable and credible. Additionally, sentiment analysis tools can be employed to monitor review quality and identify trends in consumer sentiment, allowing organisations to address any recurring issues that may impact the effectiveness of retargeting campaigns.

Ensuring high-quality reviews not only bolsters the credibility of retargeting efforts but also enhances the overall customer experience, creating a positive feedback loop that strengthens brand reputation, increases consumer trust and ultimately improves conversion rates.

6.5.18 Build online trust to enhance consumer' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting and their online purchase intentions

As per the rejection of H_{6g} and H_{6h} , South African organisations are encouraged to prioritise building online trust to enhance consumer attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting efforts, ultimately increasing the likelihood of online purchases. Arli (2024) highlights that trusted brands hold greater value for consumers, even if trust alone does not directly drive immediate purchases. To establish this trust, organisations should focus on transparency in data practices, ensuring that privacy policies are clear, accessible and that consumer data is handled ethically. Educating consumers about how their data is collected, stored and used will help alleviate privacy concerns, which are often a barrier to positive perceptions of remarketing and retargeting.

Consistently delivering high-quality products and providing responsive customer service will further strengthen consumer trust, leading to a more favourable view of remarketing and retargeting advertisements. Additionally, integrating verified, high-quality reviews from real customers into retargeting and remarketing campaigns offers social proof, enhancing product credibility and encouraging consumer confidence. Addressing negative feedback swiftly and prominently displaying verified reviews demonstrates a commitment to transparency and authenticity, which consumers value.

By focusing on these trust-building practices, organisations can enhance consumers' comfort with remarketing and retargeting efforts. This approach not only creates a more positive online experience but also strengthens brand loyalty and improves purchase intentions, establishing a strong foundation for long-term customer relationships.

6.5.19 Be cautious when using remarketing strategies to avoid reputational harm in the e-commerce space

For South African organisations, maintaining a positive e-reputation is essential when implementing remarketing strategies, as reputation significantly shapes consumer attitudes towards remarketing efforts ($\beta = -0.291$, $p = 0.000$), even if it does not directly impact purchase intentions. To avoid potential reputational harm, organisations should approach remarketing with sensitivity to consumer preferences, ensuring that campaigns do not feel intrusive or overly repetitive. Excessive exposure or overly aggressive remarketing strategies can lead to negative perceptions of the brand, eroding trust and damaging e-reputation. Strategies for caution include implementing frequency caps to limit the number of times a consumer sees the same advertisement, thereby reducing advertisement fatigue and preserving consumer goodwill. Organisations should also prioritise relevant and personalised messaging to avoid the impression of generic or overly persistent advertising. Monitoring consumer responses to remarketing

campaigns through data analytics provides insights into sentiment and helps identify any negative trends early on, allowing adjustments to be made as needed. By carefully balancing visibility and respect for consumer boundaries, organisations can use remarketing effectively while protecting their e-reputation. A measured, consumer-centric approach to remarketing strengthens consumer attitudes towards the brand, fostering a positive online experience that supports long-term loyalty and brand trust in the competitive e-commerce space.

6.6 Limitations and future research

One of the primary limitations of this study is its broad participant range, covering birth years from 1966 to 2005. This span encompasses three generational cohorts, namely Generation X, Millennials (Generation Y) and Generation Z, who exhibit distinct attitudes and behaviours regarding technology use, online shopping and digital marketing. While the diverse sample offers a variety of perspectives, it does not capture the subtle behavioural patterns and attitudes unique to each generation. For instance, Generation X, often characterised by a lower degree of digital integration, may exhibit different responses to privacy concerns and digital advertising compared to younger generations who are more accustomed to online interactions (Smith *et al.*, 2023). Without a targeted generational analysis, the results may miss nuances in how each group engages with remarketing and retargeting strategies.

Furthermore, the study exhibits a gender imbalance, with 64.9 percent of respondents being female. This disproportion limits the generalisability of the findings, as male consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards remarketing may differ significantly from those of female consumers. Addressing this gender imbalance in future research could reveal valuable insights, especially since research indicates gender can influence advertisement receptiveness and online purchasing behaviour (Kim & Park, 2013). Exploring targeted remarketing strategies for male consumers might reveal ways to more effectively engage this underrepresented demographic.

Another limitation lies in the study's focus on middle-aged consumers, who constitute the most active demographic in online shopping. While this provides valuable insights into this group's behaviour, it does not adequately represent younger (<25) and older (>55) age groups, whose digital marketing engagement patterns may differ. Future research could explore the impact of different remarketing strategies on these age groups, perhaps examining how dynamic content on platforms like TikTok resonates with younger audiences, while more traditional, informative content may appeal more to older consumers (Lanneskog, 2023).

The study highlights that remarketing awareness significantly impacts attitudes but does not directly influence purchase intentions. Future research should delve deeper into this disconnect, exploring why awareness alone does not lead to action. This line of inquiry could benefit from

behavioural insights into specific conversion barriers, even when consumers are highly aware of remarketing. Additionally, researchers could investigate factors that may bridge this gap, such as examining emotional versus rational responses to remarketing (Lin & Kim, 2016).

Privacy concerns and perceived intrusiveness significantly influence consumer attitudes in this study but do not differentiate between the types of data usage (e.g., mobile numbers, browsing behaviour) that heighten these concerns. Future research could address these nuances by exploring how specific data collection practices affect consumer trust, potentially guiding e-retailers in navigating privacy sensitivities. A longitudinal approach, tracking changes in privacy attitudes over time, could also provide insights into evolving consumer comfort with data usage practices, especially as they become more familiar with digital privacy regulations like GDPR and POPIA (Anant *et al.*, 2020).

The study's findings on informativeness indicate that while consumers appreciate informative content, it has only a marginal effect on purchase intentions. This suggests that other factors may prevent consumers from making purchases even when they receive detailed product information. Future research should investigate the types of information most influential in the decision-making process, such as product reviews, how-to guides, or price comparisons. Such an analysis could help identify content strategies tailored to specific product categories, enhancing the effectiveness of remarketing campaigns (Aljabari *et al.*, 2023).

While website design, e-trust and online reputation do not directly affect purchase intentions, their influence on consumer attitudes towards remarketing suggests they play an indirect role in the decision-making process. Future studies could explore the long-term effects of these factors on customer loyalty and repeat purchase behaviour, potentially identifying ways to convert positive attitudes into lasting consumer relationships. Examining continuous improvements in website design, trust-building features and reputation management may provide insights into sustaining consumer engagement over extended periods (Fernandes *et al.*, 2022).

In summary, future research should address sample diversity limitations, investigate the disconnect between awareness and purchase intentions, explore privacy concerns in greater detail and further examine the roles of informativeness and website design in shaping long-term consumer behaviour. These efforts can deepen our understanding of effective remarketing and retargeting strategies and inform data-driven approaches for improving consumer engagement in the evolving digital landscape.

6.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the dynamic and nuanced nature of consumer behaviour in response to remarketing and retargeting strategies. The analysis reveals that demographic

factors such as age, gender, language preferences and income play an influential role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. For instance, targeted advertising on platforms like Instagram and Facebook shows greater engagement among female and middle-aged users, suggesting that demographic-aligned marketing efforts may yield higher conversion rates. Additionally, language accessibility, particularly the availability of Setswana and English, enhances consumer engagement, emphasising the importance of cultural and linguistic relevance in digital marketing efforts.

The study further emphasises the significance of personalisation and trust in increasing purchase intentions, with consumers showing a clear preference for advertisements that are relevant, transparent and tailored to their needs. Personalised offers, such as exclusive discounts, were found to positively influence purchase decisions, although purely informative content did not consistently translate into higher purchase intentions. This suggests that digital marketers must balance informative and action-driven messaging to resonate effectively with diverse consumer groups. Privacy concerns and perceived intrusiveness emerged as critical considerations, indicating that transparent data practices and controlled advertising frequency can foster a more positive perception of digital advertisements. While website design, online trust and brand reputation do not directly drive purchase intentions, they contribute indirectly to a more favourable consumer attitude, highlighting the value of a holistic approach in digital marketing to build long-term consumer loyalty.

The study's limitations, such as gender imbalance and a focus on middle-aged consumers, provide a roadmap for future research. Addressing these areas could deepen insights into how different demographic groups respond to remarketing efforts. Furthermore, examining the gap between awareness of remarketing and actual purchase intentions, alongside evolving privacy concerns, may refine our understanding of what constitutes effective digital marketing.

Overall, this research offers valuable insights into optimising remarketing and retargeting to align with consumer preferences, enhancing both engagement and conversion rates. By considering demographic influences, prioritising transparency and focusing on personalised content, digital marketers can foster trust and build positive consumer relationships. As the field of digital marketing continues to evolve, these findings lay a foundation for remarketing strategies that are responsive to consumer needs and adaptive to shifting market dynamics.

The evolution of remarketing and retargeting strategies in emerging markets like South Africa will be driven by technological advancements, cultural shifts and increasing consumer demands for personalisation and transparency. In South Africa, marketers will leverage AI and data analytics to create more personalised experiences, while mobile penetration and improved digital

infrastructure will expand the reach of targeted advertising. The growing importance of consumer privacy will push marketers to balance personalisation with transparency, ensuring data protection and offering consumers control over advertisements. Social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook will continue to play a crucial role, with geo-targeting and language preferences helping marketers engage diverse consumer groups. South Africa's multilingual population presents an opportunity to tailor content for cultural relevance, further increasing engagement. Overall, the future of remarketing in South Africa will focus on innovation, personalisation, privacy and cultural sensitivity, ensuring marketers can build trust, drive engagement and foster long-term consumer loyalty.

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ANNEXURE A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards remarketing, retargeting and online purchase intentions

Dear Participant

I am conducting a research project under the supervision of Drs C Muller and Kirsty-Lee Sharp as part of the requirements for completing my Ph.D. in Marketing Management at the North-West University. The target population of the study comprises the general South African consumer population, aged 18 to 77, with online shopping experience. The purpose of this research is to investigate the factors influencing South African consumers' attitudes towards remarketing and retargeting strategies and their subsequent online purchase intentions. Your input in addressing this study's objectives is valuable, given that brands and marketing professionals will have access to consumers' preferences to focus their efforts on either remarketing or retargeting strategies and improve their turnover through online shopping as a result.

I would appreciate it if you could assist me by completing the attached questionnaire. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any point. The questionnaire is user-friendly and should take a maximum of 25 minutes to complete. Confidentiality of all information enclosed in this questionnaire is guaranteed and no personal questions linking you to this specific questionnaire are included (e.g. name, address or contact information); that is, your anonymity is guaranteed. The study complies with the requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013) (POPIA) and your non-identifiable responses will be stored in a password-protected file on an access-controlled Microsoft OneDrive folder. This information will be reported in aggregate form and will be used for the purpose of research publications. Demographical questions will be used for sample description purposes. Two demographic questions, namely age and gender will be used for comparative purposes.

Thank you, your assistance and contribution will be highly appreciated.

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Contact no: +27169103373

North-West University (Vanderbijlpark Campus)
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
School of Management Sciences

I have read the above description of this research study. I have been informed that it is a low-risk study that complies with the requirements of POPIA and I am aware of the purpose of the study. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study and by continuing and completing this questionnaire, I consent to the information being used in aggregate form.

Screening questions

I currently live in South Africa.

Yes	No

I was born between 1966 and 2005.

Yes	No

I have experience with online shopping.

Yes	No

I have an active social media account (Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp)

Yes	No

NOTE: If you have answered “No” to any of these questions, please discontinue the completion of the survey.

SECTION A: Demographical Information

Please mark the appropriate box with a cross (X) or write down your answer.

PR	Province of residence:	Eastern Cape	Free State	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal
		Limpopo	Mpumalanga	Northern Cape	North-West
					Western Cape

GD	Gender:	Male	Female	Other

AG	Age at last birthday:	

PL	Please indicate your preferred language:	Afrikaans	English	IsiNdebele	IsiXhosa
		IsiZulu	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana
				SiSwati	Tshivenda
					Xitsonga
	Other (please specify):				

MI	My monthly income before tax:	<R4500	R4501-R12500	R12501-R30000
		R30001-R52500	R52501-R72000	R72001-R110000
				R110001+

SECTION B: Online shopping background information

Please mark the appropriate box with a cross (X) or write down your answer.

TS	My top THREE preferred ONLINE shopping sites are:	Amazon	Builders Warehouse	Checkers	Clicks
		Game Stores	Gumtree	iStore	Loot
					Makro
					Mr Price
					NetFlorist
		OneDayOnly	PicknPay	Superbalist	Takealot
					Woolworths
					Yuppiechef
					Zando
	Other (please specify):				

BO	In a year, on average, I BROWSE for products online:	Rarely	Hourly	Daily	Weekly	Monthly

PO	In a year, on average, I PURCHASE products online:	Rarely	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually

TC	My top FIVE favourite online shopping categories (select MAX FIVE):

	Appliances	Automotive	Baby, toddlers & kids	Camping, travel & outdoors	Clothing & fashion	DIY & home improvement
	Electronics & entertainment/ gaming		Garden, patio & pool	Health, beauty & personal care		Home furniture
	Household essentials & groceries	Liquor	Office stationery & books	Smart technologies	Sport and training	Pets
	Other (please specify):					

EM	I have used my email address to sign up for online shopping accounts:	Yes	No	I do not have an email address

MN	I have used my mobile number to sign up for online shopping accounts:	Yes	No	I do not have a mobile number

Consider the social and digital media platforms listed below. Please **rank the TOP THREE platforms you use THE MOST**, by assigning a 1, 2 or 3 in the tick box next to those that apply to you. If a platform you use is not listed below, please add it to "other".

SM	Social and digital media platforms	Rank #1-3
	Facebook	
	Instagram	
	Pinterest	
	Snapchat	
	Telegram	
	TikTok	
	Twitter	
	YouTube	
	Other: (Please specify)	

SECTION C: Awareness, attitude and online shopping purchase intentions

Table 1: The differences between remarketing and retargeting (definition and examples)

Remarketing	Retargeting
Description Refers to the strategy of sending email and SMS campaigns to visitors who have browsed a specific website and abandoned their cart. A prerequisite for this strategy is that consumers had to have volunteered their email address and mobile number, or both, either by creating an account or signing up for newsletters to the specific site or affiliate sites.	Description Refers to online advertisement placement or display advertisements targeting users who have interacted with a particular website in specific ways without purchasing. Once a visitor enters a website, clicks on a product or takes a certain preferred action, a cookie is set in their browser. Retargeting is focused on paid advertisements that can take a variety of forms and target a broad range of individuals.
Example A customer visits Takealot.com or Bash.com, signs up with their email account or mobile	Example Search term: Power station 500w on Takealot.com

number, places a product in the cart, but then leaves the site. These sites send an email or SMS to this individual reminding them of their cart item and in some cases offer a discount for returning and completing the transaction.	The searcher does not act or convert. Takealot uses this cookie data and retargets the searcher on other websites and social media platforms.
Sources: Wenograd, S. 2020. Remarketing vs. Retargeting: Are They The Same Thing? https://www.searchenginejournal.com/remarketing-vs-retargeting/379703/#close Accessed 14 April 2023. Grabijas, E. 2022. Retargeting vs. remarketing: What's the difference between them? https://www.awin.com/ca/affiliate-marketing/retargeting-vs-remarketing-what-s-the-difference-1#:~:text=One%20of%20the%20main%20differences,stages%20of%20the%20buying%20cycle. Accessed 14 April 2023.	

Consider the information presented in Table 1 and answer the questions that follow.

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree/agree with each of the following statements by placing a mark in the appropriate box with an X; 1 being strongly disagree and 6 strongly agree.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
AW1	I have seen remarketing and retargeting advertisements based on products I have searched for.	1	2	3	4	5	6
AW2	I have seen photos of remarketing and retargeting advertisements based on products I have searched for.	1	2	3	4	5	6
AW3	I have seen online advertisements and received emails for products I have searched for.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ATM1	I am happy to see emails of products I searched for but did not purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ATM2	I respond positively to emails about products I searched for but did not purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ATM3	I appreciate the technique of receiving emails about products I searched for but did not purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ATT1	I am happy to see online and social media advertisements of products I searched for but did not purchase	1	2	3	4	5	6
ATT2	I respond positively to online and social media advertisements of products I searched for but did not purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ATT3	I appreciate the technique of using cookies to remind me of products I searched for but did not purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PI1	I will buy products I searched for that are advertised on websites, social media and email reminders.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PI2	I aspire to buy products I searched for that are promoted on websites, social media and email reminders.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PI3	I am likely to buy products I searched for that are promoted on websites, social media and email reminders.	1	2	3	4	5	6

PI4	I plan to buy products I searched for that are promoted on websites, social media and email reminders.	1	2	3	4	5	6
CC1	I would purchase a product I initially searched for if the remarketing/retargeting advertisements were personalised and relevant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
CC2	I would purchase a product I initially searched for if the remarketing/retargeting advertisements provide a promotional code or offer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
CC3	I would purchase a product I initially searched for if the retargeting/remarketing advertisements are relevant to my physical location.	1	2	3	4	5	6
CC4	I would purchase a product I initially searched for if the retargeting/remarketing advertisements are from a brand I trust.	1	2	3	4	5	6
CC5	I would purchase a product I initially searched for if the retargeting/remarketing advertisements are fun and entertaining.	1	2	3	4	5	6
CC6	I would purchase a product I initially searched for if the retargeting/remarketing advertisements allow me to make an immediate purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION D: Factors influencing attitudes towards remarketing/retargeting

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree/agree with each of the following statements by placing a mark in the appropriate box with an X; 1 being strongly disagree and 6 strongly agree.

Perceived value and risk of R/R strategies		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
IF1	Remarketing/retargeting advertising is a good source of information about the products I searched for.	1	2	3	4	5	6
IF2	Remarketing/retargeting advertising provides timely information about the products I searched for.	1	2	3	4	5	6
IF3	Remarketing/retargeting advertising provides meaningful information about how other consumers use the products I searched for.	1	2	3	4	5	6
IF4	Remarketing/retargeting advertising provides useful information about products I searched for that are new to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6

PC1	I am worried that my personal data (such as browsing behaviour, name or location) may be misused by the online shopping sites I visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PC2	When I visit websites to search for products, I suspect that they keep track of what I click on.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PC3	I am afraid that the personal data I share with the websites I visit are not stored safely.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PC4	I am afraid that my personal data associated with the websites I visit is distributed without my permission.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PC5	I am afraid that my personal data associated with the websites I visit can be accessed by people I do not know.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ITR1	Remarketing/retargeting advertisements are a distraction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ITR2	Remarketing/retargeting advertisements are intrusive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ITR3	Remarketing/retargeting advertisements are irritating.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ITR4	Remarketing/retargeting advertisements are invasive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ITR5	Remarketing/retargeting advertisements are interfering.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Online business factors		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
WD1	The websites I visit frequently provide in-depth information about their products.	1	2	3	4	5	6
WD2	The websites I visit frequently do not waste my time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
WD3	It is quick and easy to complete a transaction on the websites I visit frequently.	1	2	3	4	5	6
WD4	The level of personalisation on the websites I visit frequently is about right, not too much or too little.	1	2	3	4	5	6
WD5	The websites I visit frequently have a good selection of products.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ORA1	When I buy products online, I always read reviews about these products first.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ORA2	When I buy products online, the reviews about these products are helpful for my decision-making.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ORA3	When I buy products online, the reviews about these products make me confident in purchasing them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ORA4	*If I do not read the reviews of the products that I intend to buy, I worry about my purchase decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6

ORA5	*When I intend to buy a product online, reading the reviews is a burden to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ORA6	*When I intend to buy a product online, reading the reviews irritates me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ORQ1	Online reviews about products I intend to buy are sufficient.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ORQ2	Online reviews about products I intend to buy are objective.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ORQ3	Online reviews about products I intend to buy are understandable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ORQ4	Online reviews about products I intend to buy are credible.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ORQ5	*Online reviews about products I intend to buy are clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ORQ6	*In general, the quality of the reviews about the products I intend to buy is high.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ETR1	I feel safe in my transactions with online stores.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ETR2	I believe the online store can protect my privacy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ETR3	I select online stores that I believe are honest.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ETR4	In general, I feel that online stores would provide me with good service.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ETR5	In general, I feel that online stores are trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
REP1	In general, my preferred online stores have an excellent public image.	1	2	3	4	5	6
REP2	In general, I feel safe in my transactions with my preferred online stores.	1	2	3	4	5	6
REP3	In general, I consider that my preferred online stores have an excellent reputation.	1	2	3	4	5	6

* Reversed items

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION!

ANNEXURE B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATION



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Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-484
Feziwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za

15 August 2023

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) on, 28/07/2023 the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby approves your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-REC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards remarketing, retargeting and online purchase intentions

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Dr C Muller

Student: JN Ndeudjeu (26195658)

N	W	U	-	0	1	8	0	6	-	2	3	-	A	4
Institution				Study Number							Year		Status	

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type:

Commencement date: 15/08/2023

Expiry date: 15/08/2024

Risk:

Minimal

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

•

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EMS-REC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EMS-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.

n the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EMS-REC reserves the right to:

- request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*
- withdraw or postpone approval if:*
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EMS-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*

The EMS-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EMS-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Type text here

Prof Crizelle Els
Acting Chairperson: NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics
Committee

ANNEXURE C: LANGUAGE DECLARATION



Dr Linda Scott
083 654 4156
lindascott1984@gmail.com
www.justedit.co.za

15 Shannon Close
The Circus
Three Rivers
1929

English language editing
SATI membership number: 1002595

18 November 2024

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I, the undersigned, have language edited the **thesis** of

JN Ndeudjeu

Entitled:

Factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards remarketing, retargeting and online purchase intentions

The responsibility of implementing the recommended language changes rests with the author of the document.

Yours truly,

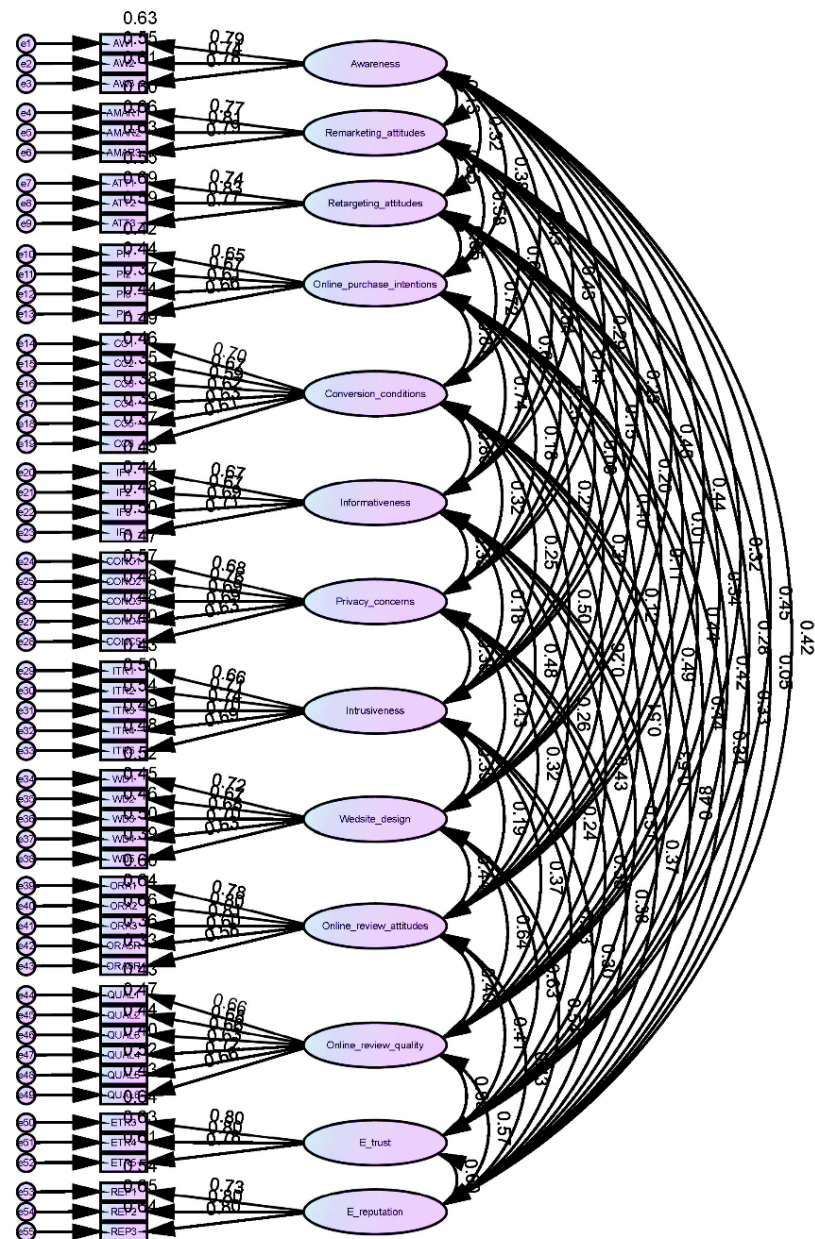


Dr Linda Scott

SATI membership number: 1002595
SACE membership number: 1096643
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ETDP SETA Assessor/Moderator: SOR number: 468097

PhD: Language Practice
MA: Intercultural Communication
BA (Hons): Language Practice
NPDE and ACE

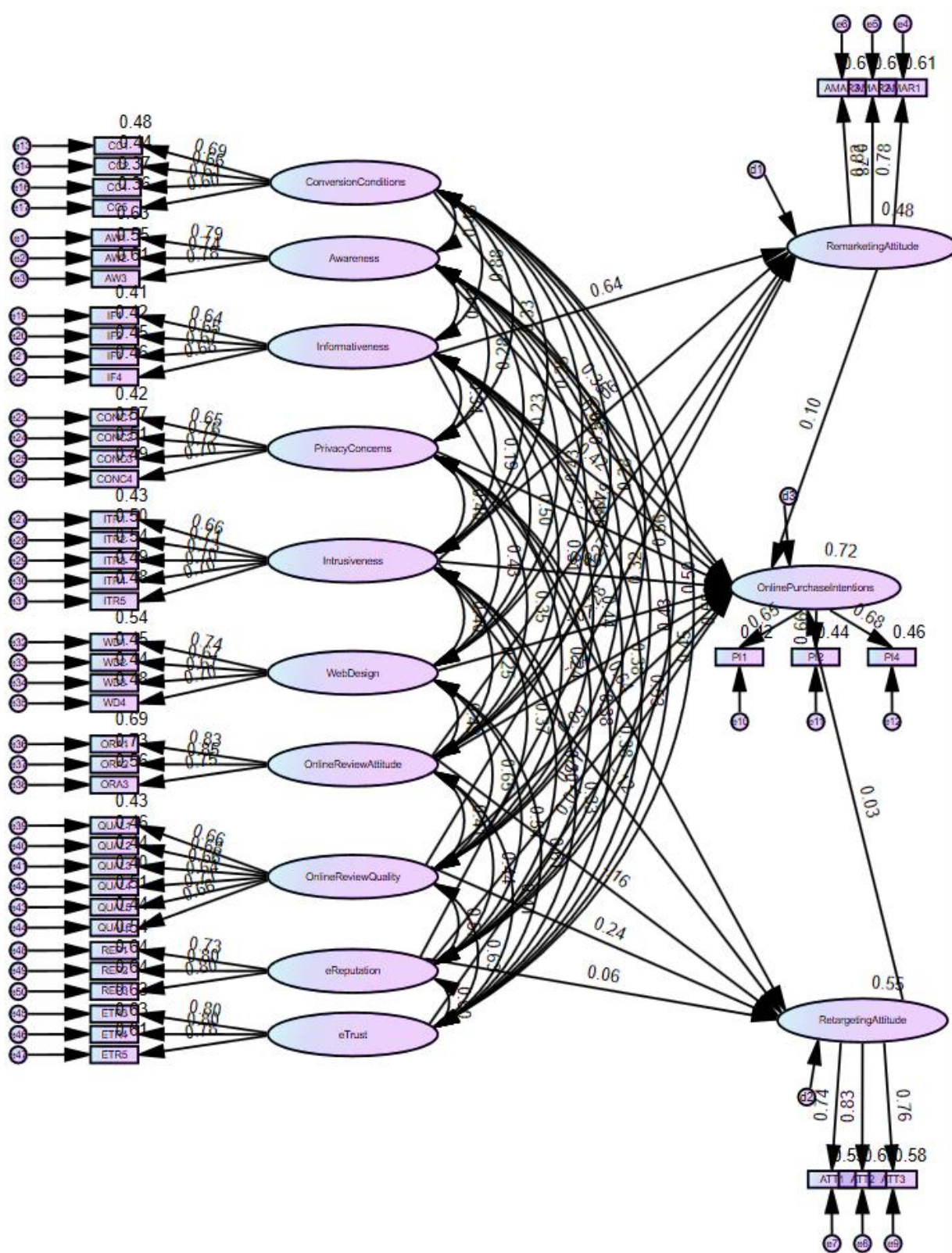
ANNEXURE D: FIRST PROPOSED MEASUREMENT MODEL



Latent factors	Coded indicators	Error variance
Online purchase intentions	PI3	0.372
Conversion conditions	CC3	0.346
	CC6	0.369
Privacy concerns	PC5	0.395
Website design	WD5	0.394
Online Review attitudes	ORA5R	0.361
	ORA6R	0.333

Removed from the model

ANNEXURE E: ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURAL MODEL 1 (ALT1)



Chi-square = 1453.920

Degrees of freedom = 1013

Probability level = .000

Model fit

Model	NFI Delta1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Default model	.811	.934	.925	.933	.037	.0434
Saturated model	1.000	1.000		1.000		
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000		

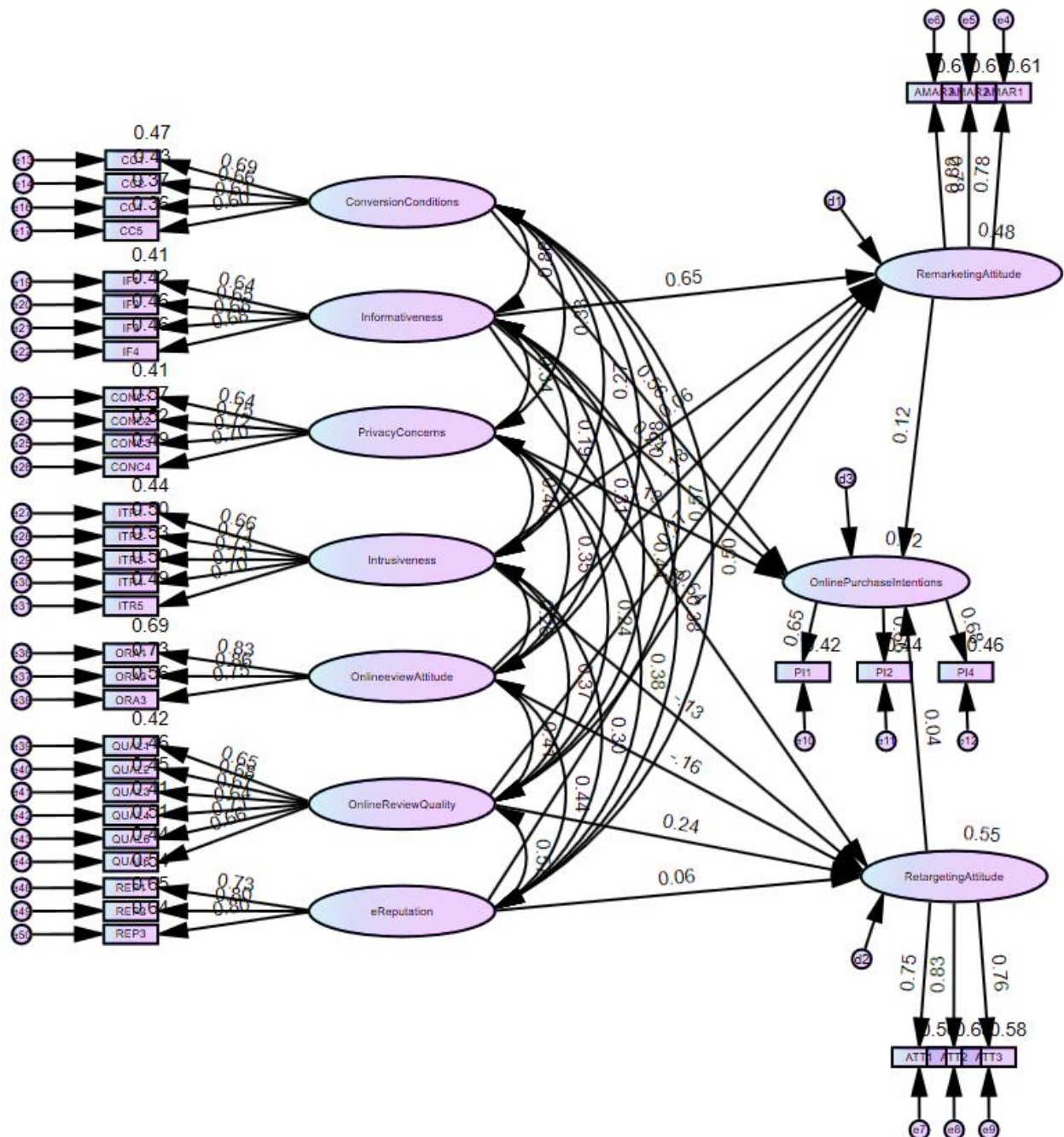
Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

Path		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardised (β)
RemarketingAttitude	<--- Informativeness	.940	.125	7.522	***	.643
RetargetingAttitude	<--- Informativeness	.895	.117	7.640	***	.644
RemarketingAttitude	<--- Intrusiveness	.076	.078	.977	.329	.063
RetargetingAttitude	<--- Intrusiveness	-.142	.071	-1.993	.046	-.124
RemarketingAttitude	<--- OnlineReviewAttitude	-.222	.081	-2.749	.006	-.187
RetargetingAttitude	<--- OnlineReviewAttitude	-.181	.073	-2.463	.014	-.160
RemarketingAttitude	<--- OnlineReviewQuality	.434	.137	3.169	.002	.272
RetargetingAttitude	<--- OnlineReviewQuality	.367	.124	2.966	.003	.242
RemarketingAttitude	<--- eReputation	-.320	.095	-3.378	***	-.279
RetargetingAttitude	<--- eReputation	.065	.083	.780	.436	.059
OnlinePurchaseIntentions	<--- ConversionConditions	.341	.248	1.374	.169	.350
OnlinePurchaseIntentions	<--- RemarketingAttitude	.085	.076	1.107	.268	.100
OnlinePurchaseIntentions	<--- RetargetingAttitude	.030	.089	.336	.737	.034
OnlinePurchaseIntentions	<--- WebDesign	-.074	.119	-.625	.532	-.066
OnlinePurchaseIntentions	<--- OnlineReviewAttitude	-.038	.084	-.453	.651	-.038
OnlinePurchaseIntentions	<--- OnlineReviewQuality	.124	.169	.733	.464	.092
OnlinePurchaseIntentions	<--- eReputation	.012	.095	.126	.900	.012
OnlinePurchaseIntentions	<--- eTrust	.005	.092	.055	.956	.005
OnlinePurchaseIntentions	<--- Awareness	.030	.067	.447	.655	.034
OnlinePurchaseIntentions	<--- Informativeness	.519	.348	1.492	.136	.421
OnlinePurchaseIntentions	<--- PrivacyConcerns	-.163	.081	-2.016	.044	-.151
OnlinePurchaseIntentions	<--- Intrusiveness	.087	.071	1.217	.224	.085

Squared Multiple Correlations: (Group number 1 - Default model)

Dependents	Estimate
RetargetingAttitude (d1)	.550
RemarketingAttitude (d2)	.477
OnlinePurchaseIntentions (d3)	.717

ANNEXURE F: ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURAL MODEL 2 (ALT2)



Model fit:

[($\chi^2 = 1454.877$, $df = 1009$, $p = 0.000$); (CFI:0.949, IFI:0.950, TLI:0.950, SRMR: 0.0426, RMSEA:0.035)].